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BRAHMARSHI
VENKATARATNAM'S
SERMONS & DISCOURSES
(SELECTED)



**BRAHMARSHI, KULAPATHI
DEWAN BAHADUR
Dr Sir R VENKATARATNAM NAIDU GARU,
KT, M A L T, D LITT LL D K I H (1
BORN 1862)**

75th BIRTHDAY SOUVENIR

Om!

Parabrahmanenamah'

BRAHMARSHI VENKATARATNAM'S SERMONS & DISCOURSES *(Selected)*

(Being Selections from the 'Six Volumes of
"Message and Ministrations" of Brahmarshi Dewan Bahadur
Dr. Sir. R. Venkataratnam Kt. M.A.L.T. D.Litt.LL.D.K-I-H (I)
Ex-Vice-chancellor, Madras University—Edited by Rao Saheb
Dr. V. Ramakrishna Rao, 'M. A., L. T., Ph. D., Ex-Principal,
Pithapur Rajah's College, Cocanada)

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“MAHARNAVAMI”—13—10—'37

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TO

**SREE RAJAH
RAVU VENKATA KUMARA MAHIPATHI
SURYA RAO BAHADUR VARU C. B. E.
MAHARAJAH SAHEB OF PITHAPURAM**

THIS 75th BIRTHDAY SOUVENIR OF
BRAHMARSHI
Dr. Sir. RAGHUPATHI VENKATARATNAM

IS DEDICATED

• WITH SINCERE ESTEEM
AND PROFOUND RESPECTS



Om!

PREFATORY NOTE.

Anything like an apt foreword to this precious souvenir is beyond the capacity of one, who has merely something to do with the bringing out of this Commemoration Volume. While yielding to none in sheer enthusiasm for broad-casting the Message in the Ministrations of the Master, I have not the necessary equipment for attempting anything like a sketch or appreciation, so essential for introducing and popularising a volume like this. Hence I have to content myself with a short prefatory note, by way of an explanation of the aim and scope of this publication; and my regret is all the keener that I have not been able, for want of time, to secure a foreword, by some eminent authority, worthy of this compilation.

Sir Venkataratnam is a commanding personality, not unknown to the public at large. Generally acknowledged as the white

robed saint of South India, he is universally acclaimed as one of the twin makers of Modern Andhra, coupled with the honoured Viresalingam Pantulu of revered memory. Thus the Andhras affectionately immortalise only one "Pantulu" garu, and one "Naidu" garu. And in the Brahma Samaj, even as we gratefully bow down to a Rajarshi (Ram-mohan Roy), a Maharshi (Devendranath Tagore), and a Brahmananda (Keshub Chendar Sen), we have likewise come to revere our "Brahmarshi" (Venkata Ratnam). To his numerous "old boys" an ever venerated "master", he is a benefactor to the public at large. Let alone the testimonies of to-day and the immortality that will be his, such an eminent Judge as the late Mahadev Govinda Ranade said of him, decades ago, when Venkata Ratnam himself was hardly four decades old, — "an earnest and genuine worker", "whose work is one of pure love and self-sacrifice", and "about whose genuine devotion to the cause there can be only one opinion."

To my humble self, he is "Nayana", the ever most beloved parent of the soul.

May this bouquet be acceptable to him and release its fragrance far and wide.

In commending this volume to public acceptance, I make bold to say, that within these covers is contained the quintessence of the highest religious thought of all climes and times — the outcome of personal experiences and realisation—mostly inspired and extempore out-pourings of the soul.—If I venture to distil a whole theme into a single phrase or two, the resonant message is, “*God is*” and “*God is Love*”: and the clarion call goes forth from page to page, “*Pray*”; “*Pray without ceasing*”; “*Worship Him in Spirit and in Truth*”; “*Grow in Faith and Enjoy Him alone!*”

The venerable author's message, provides food for the hungry, nectar to the thirsty, succour to the sick, cheer to the drooping, hope to the sinning and aid to the falling. Alike in the majesty of language and the sublimity of thought, his Message and Ministrations are superb, marvellous, “beyond compare.” May I not with all the earnestness at my command, fervently appeal specially

to the youth of the country to dive deep over and over again into this ocean of wisdom, and gather the priceless treasure it yields? The more one reads, the brighter the message glows, the fresher the appeal rings.

I am guilty — I shiver at the thought— of blasphemy in attempting a selection from the treasure. Only twelve sermons and twelve discourses, considered to be some of his master-pieces, are embodied in these pages. The liberty I allowed myself at once pained and baffled me. I unreservedly apologise to the author, the editor, and the reader for this audacity, though reluctantly exhibited. It was not without a pang that I had to omit from this volume, amongst other illuminating themes, admirable articles written by the author, even as a youth of twenty.

I cannot fail to acknowledge the deep debt of lasting gratitude under which Rao Saheb Dr V. Rama Krishna Rao, M. A., L.T., Ph. D., has placed the public, by his love-labour which alone has made it possible for six volumes of the Message and Ministra-

tions to see the light of day, so far. Nor can the labours of those good brothers that supplied him with parts of the material—one of whom is Principal Ramaswamy — can ever be forgotten. Wide use of these volumes by the public is all the reward that they expect. And the publication of this volume is simply intended to serve the sole purpose of broadcasting some of the master-pieces of the Sage's word's of wisdom. If this can but create in my countrymen an urge for reading all the volumes which can well be classed among the best books of the world, the aim and ambition of this publication will have been amply fulfilled, for it is a great pity that the master's speeches and writings are not yet so widely spread as they richly deserve to be. One striking feature about them is they have an autobiographical touch, in that, they are the outpourings of his "Heart-beats" ever "In tune with the Infinite."

It is my pleasant privilege and heart-felt duty to bow my head in soul-deep gratitude to him, whose admiration and enthusiasm for the Master's "Message and Ministrations" —

coupled with his munificence — are unparalleled amongst the galaxy of the Brahmarshi's adorers and admirers — the ever esteemed and honoured Maharajah Saheb of Pithapuram, C. B. E., for his gracious assent to the dedication of this volume.

At the altar of the hallowed feet of Brahmarshi "Nayana" I lay the incense of my profound and devout obeisances of love for the perennial inspiration that I derive from his great volumes, which are his gift and benediction to my life. Writing to the Golden Book of Tagore, published to commemorate the septuagenary of Asia's poet laureate, he wrote these words: "To the supremely-gifted seer, the rightful heir to the heaven-illumined spirit of the Maharshi, is reverently rendered this humble homage through the devoutest *pranams* of a heart that is moved with deep gratitude for rich inspiration emanating from his sublime teachings." May these words not be with equal truth, reverently addressed to the venerable author himself, by my humble self, as I offer this tribute, on this sacred occasion?

Before closing, I cannot withhold a word of thanks to the printers for their prompt and enthusiastic execution of this work.

God cherish this endeavour !
May the All Merciful God grant
many more happy returns of
This Holy Day!

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CONTENTS.

SERMONS

S. No.	Title	Vol.	Page
1.	Darkness the Shadow of Providence	... V	1
2.	"Aviraveeramayedhi"	... IV	13
3.	'Enjoy him alone'	... IV	28
4.	The Pilgrim Soul	... VI	41
5.	The Ascents of Devotion	... VI	52
6.	'The Leper's Bride' and 'Romney's Remorse'	... VI	67
7.	Religion and Life	... V	77
8.	The Spouse Divine	... I	85
9.	'Sadhana'—Its meaning and Method	... II	98
10.	Work and Worship	... I	109
11.	The Spiritual Basis of Human Brotherhood	II	119
12.	The Moral Law of the Spirit	III	128



DISCOURSES

S. No.	Title	Vol.	Page
13.	Religion & Worship ...	IV	145
14.	God & Democracy ...	VI	174
15.	Some implications of Love	V	200
16.	Higher morality & Deeper Spirituality ...	V	218
17.	Prayer ; its universality & its Potensy ...	III	235
18.	"As thou art, so is Hari"...	IV	245
19.	The New Pilgrimage ...	VI	260
20.	Theistic Synthesis ...	VI	271
21.	Culture and Duty ...	III	282
22.	Social Purity ...	II	295
23.	Rajah Ram Mohan Roy ...	I	329
24.	Jalal-ud-din Rumi ...	VI	360



PRAYER *

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*Om ! Satyam Jnanamanantham Brahma
Anandaroopamamritham Yadvibhathi Santham
Sivamaduritham Suddhamapapariddham !*

Thou the Supreme, the Eternal, the Everlasting 'Empyrean that infinity abides in! Thou art *Sathyam*. Can the tongue utter '*Sathyam*,' can thought conceive '*Sathyam*,' can the soul receive '*Sathyam*,' without being so purified and sanctified as to be incapable of, as to be absolutely impervious to, anything that is false, unreal, illusory, ephemeral? Thou art *Sathyam*—the very rock-foundation of the whole universe; the cementing strength of the whole universe; the eternal guarantee of the perfection of the whole universe; the imperishable that suffers no iota or particle to slip into non-entity. Thou art the

* Extract from Service entitled Pavanam in Pithapuram Palace, on the eighteenth birth-day of the Second Maharajah-kumar (4.11-31).

Sathyam that imports into every word a divine sense, a sacred, sanctifying significance; that imparts to each sense a heavenly power; that renders every fibre of this earthly being a thrill with a vivifying life that can never perish. Thou art the *Sathyam* which to each beat of the heart gives the significance of the throb of love; in the amplitude of which the myriads of stars glow. Thou art the *Sathyam* that through the revolving seasons discloses the perennial providence of God and renders it impossible that there should be any conflict between orb and orb, between creature and creature, between man and man, between saint and saint. That *Sathyam* Thou art. Shall not we breathe the breath of *Sathyam*, have our homely ablutions at the fount of *Sathyam*, with every look and utterance shed forth the light of *Sathyam*, with every foot-step and gesture witness unto *Sathyam* in every interest and concern of life reveal *Sathyam* and on every day and in every moment record and report *Sathyam*?

We bow before Thee, and we bless and glorify Thee that Thou, the God of *Sathyam*,

art likewise the God of *Jnanam*. Not a ray of light without, not a glimpse of truth within, not a throb of love any where, but is flowing and radiating forth from Thee as the Fountain-head of *Jnanam*. 'Wisdom' is a poor word and 'knowledge' paltry beneath contempt to denote and designate Thee as *Jnanam*. Oh the glory, the lustre, of that *Jnanam* which surges through ages! Beyond the reach of the stars, preceding the ages of world-formation, penetrating into the unknown depths of the soul, thou art the God of *Jnanam*. Truth revealed is *Jnanam*. Truth brought home to the business and the bosom of man is *jnanam*. Truth leading the soul along the pilgrimage of life is *Jnanam*. Truth cherishing every aspiration and blessing every endeavour is *jnanam*. Truth as it looks upon the child in hope and confidence and upon the parent in love and solicitude — that is *jnanam*. Thy *jnanam* lit as the beacon-light along the voyage of life — how it voices itself in the prophets, visions itself in the saints, blesses itself in the sages, and not only sustains helplessness but urges on the trust and confidence of man in man! Unto thee we

render our obeisances as the God of *jnanam*.

This *sathyam* eternal; this *jnanam* all-embracing yet all-transcending—what are they but eternal verities of Thee, the infinite God. Thou art infinite, *Anantham*; and Thou hast ordained unto every man the blessedness of infinite growth an expansion in Thee. Infinite is the measure of Thy being and doing, the height of Thy greatness, the reach of Thy vastness, the profundity of Thy depth. Thou finite God that thus workest every minute the miracle of the finite glimpsing and growing into the Infinite One, we bow before Thee and render our reverent adoration unto Thee. Thou art the matchless, measureless, limitless, eternal *Brahman*. Oh the blessedness of being, however meagrely, led to realise Thee, even to feel the slightest throb of Thy infinite being! This is our bliss more than our salvation. It is our eternal beatitude. Unto Thee we render our devoutest obeisances.

As Thou art eternally the Infinite Being, Thou art the ever-self-manifesting, self-expressing *Anandrocipamamritham*. Thus dost Thou figure Thyself all over the universe—

more than symbol and photograph, the living manifestation of Thee. In endless *Anandam* and imperishable *Amritham*, Thou art manifest always and everywhere.

And so manifesting Thyself, Thou reproducest Thyself in Thy *Anar lam* as *Santham* and in Thy *Amritham* as *Sivam*.

Once again, Thy omnipervasiveness enclosing all and assuming all into the one, indivisible One, Thine is the *Advaitam*, the Oneness of harmony, of immortal fellowship and inexhaustible love. Thus, Thou art the all-unifying, all-perfecting, all-perpetuating God.

And through this cosmic process of the emerging God, the emancipating God, the perfecting God, we reach our eternal destiny and the fulfilment of Thy holy purpose in *Suddhamapapaviddham*, sinlessness and flawlessness, sanctity and holiness. In Thy holiness we live, lost to all that is of passion, impervious to all that is tempting, allured by nothing but the desire to revel in

Thee and Thy adoration. This is the immortality of the holy children of the Holy God. And thus we are ever blessed in Thee, in the perfection of Divinely-sanctified humanity. Blessed be Thy name now and for ever !

DHYANAMU.

Asathomasadgamaya ; thamasomajyothirgamaya ; mrithyormamrithamgamaya ; ariraveer-mayedhi ; Rudrayatthey dakshinam mukham, thenamampahinithyam !

That *dakshinammukham*, the smile of that benignant countenance, of that awe-inspiring yet all-perfecting face of Thine, oh dread God and yet dear God—do Thou cast it upon our souls; and with that protection which Thou alone canst extend, not merely of the providence that foresees, but of the parent that for ever extends the eternal arms around, do Thou ever keep us. And in that keeping, revealing and reproducing Thyself unto and in each one of us, do Thou lead every soul out of untruth into truth, out of darkness into light, out of death into deathlessness. Do Thou grant that we for ever

live in Thee the immortal life of adoration and ecstasy. *Om ! That Sath !*

PRARDHANA.

Thou art the *Pavanamoorthi*—not the cleansing, not the purifying, but the hallowing God ; not the washing, not the baptising, but the sanctifying God. All that thou designest and devisest for man is to this end that the soul be rendered *pavanam*, be shaped into sanctity itself. Thus Thou art the *Pavanamoorthi* ; and eternity has been possible even unto Thee, as Thou art the *Paranamoorthi*. What can weaken, taint, corrode and corrupt the *pavanam*, the sancity, that Thou art? All hostile, all adverse, all undermining possibilities are rendered simply unthinkable, as Thou art the *Pavanamoorthi*. If only we had the nature of *pavanam* in us, the purity of spirit in us, we should plainly and unmistakably see how Thy whole creation is one perpetual progress of *pavanam*, sanctification. The so-called elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—are but Thy purifying agents. We dread the earth as it trembles and quivers in earthquake and volcanic

eruption. We dread water as it courses in torrents. We dread fire as it rages in conflagration. We dread the air as it sweeps and uproots in tempest. We dread the ether as it floods down, not in the soft ray of light, but in the blinding flash. Yet every one of these—what is it but a purifying, sanctifying agency for the *pavanam*, the sanctity, of the whole universe? Dirtied, we wash; soiled, we burn; tainted, we bring in fresh air; bedimmed, we employ brightening earths; and, above all, begloomed, we receive light that comes on wings of ether. Thus all are, indeed, emissaries employed by Thee, the *Pavanamoorthi*. In all the processes and activities of life, it is Thy *pavanam* that is being steadily worked out. Passion afflicted with pain, sin tortured with remorse, feebleness tutored into strength, hopelessness nerved into confidence, ignorance illumed into knowledge, enmity struggling into amity, differences mingled into comradeship — what are these but the processes and activities of *pavanam*, the eternal goal and fulfilment of life? Wherever knowledge increases and refinement is accepted, comradeship appreciated, hatred detested,

veracity honoured, impurity held reprehensible, chastity accorded reverence, holiness prized, strife and conflict and discord discountenanced—there it is the process of Thy *pavanam* working itself out. In the daily bath taken, in the hourly cup of water quaffed, in the momentary draught of refreshing breath inhaled, in the look that desires to repose on the calm and the fresh and the beautiful, in the longing for harmony and melody, in the hunger and thirst for goodness, love and grace—in all these, we behold, again, Thy purpose of *pavanam*, sanctification. Man is held blessed only as he is steeped in the bliss of Thy *pavanam*—not the sanctity that is supercilious and looks down upon the sinner but the sanctity that can reach down to impurity and, through the irresistible force and power of its own purity, transform the entire spirit and its surroundings. What is *pavanam* but purity fulfilled, purity breathed, and purity penetrating the whole being? Thou art the God of *pavanam*; and we are Thy children only as and to the extent to which we are sanctified by Thy Holy Spirit. We name Thee by a thousand names even according to a thousand affinities established in each one of us. Yet

these all are intertwined into one string, one eternal, indestructible tie of sanctity as between Thee and ourselves; and what can we plead for except, what importunate petition and supplication have we but for, Thy *pavanam*? Vouchsafe it; and we are blessed. With *pavanam* wanting, it is all utter destitution, absolute ruin and irreclaimable degradation. We shall not call Thee to elevate us; for Thou dost descend into our depths. We shall not appeal to Thee to reproduce Thyself in us; for we know we have to be reborn into Thee. Grant us this rebirth every moment into Thy Holy Spirit. If Thou dost vouchsafe unto us this life of *pavanam*, sanctity, it is bliss, it is heaven and paradise in the realm within, yet reaching out into the world without. Do Thou grant that in our hearts dwell *pavanam*, in our souls be enshrined *pavanam*, over our thoughts reign *pavanam*, all our activities be inspired by *pavanam* and the very substance and essence of our whole being be *pavanam*. Thou *pavanamoorthi*, grant that on this occasion we feel Thy power of sanctifying spirit and, feeling it, enjoy the bliss of Thy sanctifying benediction. Sanctify us, we beseech Thee.

DARKNESS THE SHADOW OF PROVIDENCE*

(1929)

Fellow-believers in the Supreme God and fellow-worshippers of the Father of all ! Confiding in His Holy Spirit, I will endeavour to address to you a few simple words, frail with my many shortcomings but not unlikely through God's grace to prove a little helpful to us all in our humble endeavours to walk in the ways of the Lord.

Several of you have, of course, an idea of the genius of Emerson, that God-illuminated soul who could, within the brief compass of a short poem, present the real essence of man's trust in God and man's deepest religious experiences. If, for instance, we read his short poem to which, for a Westerner, he gives the surprising title of *Brahma* and ponder the truths it states, then, with no exaggeration we may say that a thoughtful reader can discover in it the distilled spirit of the

* At the Brahmopasana Mandir, Masulipatam (23-11-29).

Vedanta doctrine, and that to the West, with its scientific pursuits and humane pre-occupations, he therein disclosed the sublime varieties of the deep mysticism of the East. From this stand-point, it has been reported of him-that, during his English tour, some of his friends who found him, as they thought, incurably and unreasoningly optimistic, since he always persisted in the profession that all is good in this world, took him to Newgate Prison, filled with hundreds of criminals of all varieties, guilty of all kinds of degrading doings, and enquired, 'What do you say now? Is this a good world?' And with that deep-founded, rock-based faith of his, Emerson answers, 'Yes; the world is yet good!' The thought in his mind was akin to the noteworthy observation of another great thinker that every jail, correctly understood, humanely used and prayerfully administered, is verily a hospital for the sick soul. It is not the stone walls that indicate the purpose of a jail. The faith which, rather, is the background of a jail, is that as the criminal, wisely handled and sympathetically directed, undergoes the ordeal of imprisonment, his

soul will also progress through the purgatory of penitence into the paradise of a reclaimed child of God. It was this faith that helped Emerson to see nothing dismal in the spectacle before him and to declare confidently that, not merely in spite of the jail, but even because of it, the world is, indeed, a good world—a God-fashioned and God-governed world.

Now, what is a jail the emblem of and what is the lesson taught by it? It is that the human race is, by immense odds, against criminality. For, if criminality were the general trend, then, not the criminal but the man of right conduct would be segregated or incarcerated as an abnormal or an undesirable person. Every seat of justice is really a throne on which the Spirit of God is installed and from which, through the advocacy of the pleader, the confession or denial of the accused, the testimony of the witness, the opinion of the assessor and finally the insight of the Judge, God pronounces the eternal dictum that this world is, after all is said, designed to be a good world. We are all, at

one time or another, subjected to the smart of the goading question and the distracting doubt, 'Are we, indeed, under the dispensation and guidance of a good God?' And again and again, as the agitation of the passing day subsides, as the excitement in the surface feelings at war with the deeper intuitions is lulled, as the lowering clouds are dissipated and the beaming stars once again come into view, the soul is aglow with the solemn re-affirmation, *Suvisalamidamviswam pavithram Brahmamandiram*. This wide universe is not a random conglomerate of ill-assorted contents but an ordered, articulated, harmonised cosmos—the sacred temple of God, the consecrated sanctuary of the Holy Spirit. Let us, through a short but illuminating story which I shall presently relate, try to receive and retain in our hearts this everlasting hope that we are, for ever, in direct touch with, in the very embrace of, a good God—good because in His innermost substance He is Love itself.

Some centuries ago there lived a profound mystic, Tauler by name. As he dwelt in the

City of Strasburg by the Rhine, he was haunted by the one perplexing problem of the solemn Mystery of Life: what may be its real intent; why has it been brought into existence; where can we find that peace which, if there existed a good God, ought to be the end and goal of all? With this age-long problem troubling his mind, he was having a stroll alongside of the river. He felt like one wandering in a starless night, feeling the jar of unseen waves and hearing the thunder of an unknown sea breaking along an unimagined shore. That is to say, his soul was passing through that travail of the spirit when it can neither believe nor disbelieve, when belief cannot be ratified by conviction and yet disbelief cannot prevail against intuition. In this distracted state, as he walked, he prayed the same old prayer of a decade of torment—the groan of gnawing anguish in the heart—“Lord, have pity on me; for while I pretend to lead others, I am myself blind; vouchsafe guidance unto my groping steps! How harrowing is the misery of the soul that others credit with wisdom and turn to with trust; while, in its proper

self, it has neither the light that guides nor the strength that sustains!' As this sorrowing supplication is once again uttered, Tauler hears, drawing near, the steps of a poor, feeble, aged man supporting himself on a staff. As he comes within hearing, Tauler greets him, 'Peace unto thee, father! God give thee a good day!' The old man lifts up his calm blue eyes and answers, 'I thank thee, my son, for thy good-will. But all my days are good, and none are ill.' Tauler wishes him a good day, as though it is a special gift of Providence; but the stranger avers that all his days are good. This startles Tauler. To the humble-souled believer, every day is good; to him there is no evil day (*durdinam*), except that on which the soul fails to remember the Lord—to delight in His contemplation (*smaranam*). Thus astonished, Tauler further wishes to try the stranger and, therefore, says, 'God give thee happy life!' The old man smiles and observes, 'I never am unhappy.' This is too much for the doubting soul of Tauler. He places his hand upon the old man's coarse, gray sleeve and says, 'Tell me, O father, what thy

strange words mean. Surely man's days are evil, and his life sad as the grave it leads to.' 'No, decisively no,' is the stranger's answer to Tauler, 'Our times are in God's hands; His daily gifts are in complete accord with our real needs. Be it shadow or sunshine, be it want or wealth, what He grants is the best for us and merits our thanks. The sole evil in our life is to miss sharing in God's holy life. And I derive and enjoy unbroken happiness from submission to His will and from trust in His Wisdom, Goodness and Power. In Him inhere the Goodness that purposes, the Wisdom that plans and the Power that accomplishes, the noble ends of our life.' The answer fills the great preacher only with dumbstricken wonder. After a pause, the old haunting doubt surges up again, as if with the terrific form of a ghost; and Tauler hurls the question at the old man: 'How would it fare with you, should God consign you hence to Hell?' 'Be it so,' is the serene avowal. The stranger does not know what Hell is; but he knows he can never lose the presence of God. His soul is endowed with two arms—Humility and

Love—Humility with which he embraces Humanity, Love with which he holds to God. So, he is always with God, inseparably united to God; and to him Hell and Heaven make no difference. Better Hell with God, if that could be, than Heaven without God! Yes; if we attain to that state of God-realisation when we can declare, 'Where I go, He goes; wherever I am, He is.'—why, that is *jeevanmukti* the life beatific. All veils are rent, all knots are broken, all barriers are levelled; and in the garden of love are seated, love-making, 'Thou and I,' as Hafiz has it. This brings tears, as it could not but, into Tauler's eyes; and as the marvellous old man glides out of view, Tauler bows his head and exclaims that his prayer has been answered and God has sent the long-sought man of the heaven-illuminated soul, whose simple trust begets more wisdom than all the bookful-lore of the school-men could. With a new light in his eye and a new joy in his heart, Tauler enters back the City-gates. And he sees far off across the broad street a mighty shadow over the bright mid-day light. As he traces it back, he comes to the basement of a church,

and running his eye along the whole length of the edifice, his view rises to the point where on its tower is placed the sun-filled crown of mid-day radiance; and in that light he sees that it is this church, radiant at the top, that is casting its deep shadow across the street. As he reflects on this sight, his soul receives the illuminating truth—the one truth that, reverently pondered, not only dissolves all doubt but transfigures the groping seeker into the sure seer of divine wisdom namely, yonder tower, with mid-day radiance at the top but dark shade at the base, is a graphic symbol of man's life which, rooted in the earth but reared into the heaven, must, and cannot but, be a composite of mundance clay and celestial ray. With whatever analogue invested, in the struggle to convey the inconveyable, the truth at the core is that the human soul is a way-farer through the world and has to ascend from darkness into light: *tamasomajyothirgamaya*. 'The dust that I was He has moulded into man,' says an Urdu poet. And man's high destiny is to emerge into an angel—a being composed of undimmed light. During this emergence the

soul's eye has to be trained to fix a steady glance, through the enveloping gloom, at the central gleam of guidance on every path. Hence, across the path of man lies the shadow which the great Sun of Wisdom casts thereon. It is dark below, even because there is light above. What is Providence but the peep of Purpose through the cloud of Chance? Darkness is a foil to Light. Trust is the soul's vigil for the coming matins.

That is the story, rendered in beautiful verse by Whitter, one of the most inspired poets of America. As we intently ponder it and prayerfully receive its message, do we not feel that we are, one and all, exalted as His beloved children into the very bosom of the Holy One? Of the many priceless truths in this poem, let us, for a moment or two, dwell upon that one which is a most inspiring exemplification, in plain homely form, of the reality, the immediacy, the blessedness, of our relation to God. As the body is endowed with two arms, so is the spirit, too, gifted with two arms. With one arm, Humility, I take hold upon His dear Humanity;

with the other arm, Love, I clasp His Divinity. Then, what is the human spirit but the casket, the treasure-trove, of the whole wealth of truth contained in Humanity and Divinity? After all, what constitutes the process of life may be summed up in one word: the man-ward descent of God and the God-ward ascent of man—humanity sanctified (may the word ‘divinised’ be risked?) even through the indwelling spirit of God: *Isavasyamidamsarvam*. This descent (*avatarana*) of Divinity into Humanity with the return ascent,—this circle of spiritual current, transmuting and transfiguring Humanity into the mirror, the image, of Divinity—this sublime truth it is that is implied in Tennyson’s profound declaration, ‘On God and God-like men we build our hopes’. Again, let us think of Humility and love as the two arms with which man is to work out his eternal destiny—that Humility which is forward to do good but shrinks to see it famed, which gives ‘in the name of God’ (*Allah-ke-nam-par*), forgets what it has given, and renders thanks and rejoices that it has been elected to serve; and that Love which loves and seeks no return, which is loyal even

unto death, which (moth-like) delights to be consumed by and assumed into the Beloved—Life achieved in merger into Love! Thus, and thus alone, does the eye of devout love discern the divinity in man through all veils—through all disguise, form or place or name,’ as our poet has it elsewhere in his noble apostrophe to Democracy. For unto the eye of loving faith, there is placed, on every son of man, be he ever so sin-stained or self-crippled, the crown of Divine grace. Thus, and thus alone, the world we live in and the life we live in it are at once God-indwelt and God-blest; and thus alone does God rejoice in man. Oh, if only we carry with us this conviction and this consciousness wherever we go, why, then, our life is *dhanya*. It is the conquest of the world-conqueror, the discomfiture of death—*mrityunjay*. That is life Immortal in God: *Ne plus ultra*.

‘AVIRAVEERMAYEDHI.’

(1928)

Fellow-worshippers of our dear God and Parent and Teacher: let me invite you to a fraternal—a mutually trustful and helpful—contemplation of a grand, an inspiring, a saving truth relating to, and helping to disclose to us, our dear God. Let us, heart in heart, proceed on this pilgrimage to the innermost shrine of the Spirit.

There is that oft-repeated and yet never stale but ever fresh, always illumining text: *Aviraveermayedhi Rudra yathay dakshinam mukham thena mam pahi nithyam* (Oh thou, self-effulgent, self-radiant, self-manifesting, self-revealing One, that self-revelation of Thine do Thou make unto me; do Thou, reveal Thyself unto me. Thou Awe-inspiring One, do Thou, with Thy re-assuring, re-vivifying countenance, ever protect me.) Now let us clearly realise this supreme truth, that the God of true religion is the self-revealing God. Philosophy may accept the God of causation or the God of rule and government.

Faith, simple faith, may be content with and the popular creed may contemplate only, the God of supremacy and even of affection. But Religion, which denotes true, noble life, needs, longs for, and is satisfied only with, the God of self-revelation. It is not the First Cause, not the Prime Originator, not the All-ruler, not even the All-beneficent All-protecting One; it is the Self-revealing God that Religion demands and offers. God is the Supreme Self-revealer. Says Miss Cobbe, one of the earliest to expound pure Monotheism in this modern age, that the first principle of Religion is, not God the Father, not God the Son, but God the Holy Spirit—the Self-Revealer, the Self-reporter, the Self-exponent; and we that are Theists can never get into the centre, the heart, of the truth in Religion until we have, not merely as formal doctrine, but as deep-rooted conviction, accepted the first principle that the spring, the fountain-head, of all religion is this—God is a self-revealing God. It shows how Religion is certainly not the invention of man, not even the discovery of man, a result of man's quest and an achieve-

ment of man's probing insight; Religion is really the self-irradiation of God. It originates, not with man, but with God. It is God's own design that man shall be religious. It is not man that has struggled up to Religion. It is the eternal desire of God, as Miss Underhill observes, to pass beneath the low lintel of the heart of man and thus be enshrined in the soul of Man. We should make it perfectly clear unto ourselves—there is no room for doubt or hesitation about it—that Religion is God's gracious gift to man.

God spontaneously relieves Himself. It is of the very nature of God — if such language could be permitted towards God, it is the true secret of Divine Love, of eternal, universal Love—to express itself through Creation. To think of the Sun existing and yet emitting no light—that is the very height of absurdity. In the physical world, all objects are perceived only in the light of the Sun. But the Sun functions both as the self-revealing luminary and the all-disclosing light. Likewise, in the realm of Religion, God is at once the supreme Author of Reli-

gion and the perfect Exemplar of Religion. God is both self-effulgent glory and all-sanctifying holiness. He is Grace Himself, and he imparts grace to all. The whole round of creation is simply inconceivable except as the expression, the manifestation, of His spirit. He, the Self-revealing One, is ceaselessly flooding our souls with the illumination of His truth and goodness and holiness, with such measureless wealth of variety and multiplicity, that we often forget its source and its inflow on account of its very fulness and continuity. What we never miss we do not care to remember. Hence we should firmly grasp the truth that God is the Spirit pervading the whole universe and it is of his very nature thus to express Himself. God is God unto us, even because He is thus self-revealing; and the only creation of God that is real creation consists of souls that are repositories of this divine revelation. All the rest of nature is only accessory and auxiliary. The fecund responsive human spirit is the sole creation of God. The heart, the vital centre, of God's self-revelation is man, who alone can receive,

who alone can be lit and led by, this Emanation of the Spirit.

Hence comes the prayer, 'Oh Thou Self-revealing One! Do Thou reveal Thyself unto me.' Note, the prayer is that God reveal *Himself* to man. It is not the petition for extraneous gifts and graces. It is not the petition even for virtue and diety. 'Reveal *Thyself* unto me:' Nothing short of God Himself will satisfy the adorer. Thou art the Self-revealing One; and I am meant to reflect and rejoice in that self-revelation of Thine. Therefore, do Thou reveal *Thyself* unto me. Here is the full sum and substance, the whole scope and content, of our prayer. Prayer may take a million forms according to time, circumstance and temperament. But this alone forms that true prayer which has been rightly defined as the God-ward reaction of man to the man-ward action of God. Creation, as defined above, is the man-ward action of God. And worship is the God-ward reaction of man. God is truly descending in His own holy and blessed nature; and man is His true creature, the offspring

of His own spirit, designed to accord to Him a welcome and a reception. Prayer is the expression of the awakened desire, the conscious hungering, in man for God. The fulfilment and perfection of man's life consists in receiving God into himself. 'Lead, kindly Light' is, after all, a lower prayer. A higher prayer is: 'Come into me; dwell in me; make me a shrine of Thy Holy Spirit.' As that sainted female-Sufi, Ra'bia said, 'God, if I seek Thee from fear of hell, throw me into that hell; if I seek Thee from desire of heaven, keep me from that heaven; but if I seek Thee for Thy own sake, oh, unveil Thy face!' This is verily the highest, noblest prayer given to man, as God's child, to offer. And the whole process of growth in man lies in the increasing experience of this self-revelation of God in man. God is hidden within and around us; and our prayer and life-occupation, our worship and work, consists in this—that we are to bring into open vision this God enshrined in the heart of all creation.

When thus we are filled with the self-illumination of God, the very dust under the

feet becomes sacred; and what the world contemns as the dirtiest of occupations, even scavenging, becomes the ministry of love. There is no longer the talk of self-sacrifice which one is tired of hearing in the work-a-day world. Once we realise that the whole purpose of creation is the self-revelation of God, our one business in time and through eternity is perceived to be not self-sacrifice but self-dedication, self-sanctification and thereby self-realisation—the verification of the God is man. Once I heard two persons at a circus talk. One says, ‘I desire to see the *tamasha*’; and the other replies, ‘I desire to show the *tamasha*!’ This is just the relation between the *jeevatma* and the *Paramatma*. Grant me to reflect the revelation of God made to me, in disclosing the godly aspect or significance of things. This divine import and intent of things we have to realise and then reveal to the world. ‘Oh, Thou Self-revealing One, do Thou reveal Thyself to me.’ I must become the mirror of God, the prism through which the charm of God is radiated. This is the meaning and the purpose of this noble prayer. The look, the gesture, the utter-

ance, the whole air of the man imbued with the spirit of this prayer, has a divine expression. Every task becomes self-realisation. The seeming drudgery of life spells not merely the duty but also the delight of life. The prosaic business of toy-making is really creating after God. Thus we have to spell out the secret of the Divine in all. The appeal of the rose is not to the nose but to the God in man. That was why Emerson removed his hat when he saw a blooming rose in the garden—an act this which all cannot appreciate and which, in fact, even a learned and sympathetic biographer calls histrionic and theatrical. The tongue that utters, the ear that hears, the mind that interprets and the heart that responds—all are but the ceaseless currents of God's self-manifesting truth, love and holiness. In consequence of this self-revealing nature of God, we gain the glorious gift of unfailing companionship with God. Bare solitude where I am absolutely alone becomes impossible. Utter desertion and isolation where there is none to bestow a thought on me, becomes unthinkable. The talk of evil that nothing can redeem is blasphemous. Impenetrable dark-

ness—that is a mere myth. The storms were raging in all fierceness, the tiny cock-shells of boats were being ruthlessly tossed about, as they were voyaging over the Atlantic from England to America. While others tremble that any moment they may be gulped down the jaws of death, the man of God, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, exclaims: ‘Courage, comrades, on the sea we are as near heaven as on the land!’. The self-revelation of God never forsakes him who has once seen that light. The carpenter has chiselled and smoothed; and we say, ‘what a fine piece of furniture!’ But all such human productions are rightly the self-donation of God, that man may see how God is attending and tending. And *nishkama*, having no desire and design, no calculation and profit-scoring, comes to the man of God with the spontaneity of Nature. God is self-revealing; and I must receive and render back that revelation. Again, unto the monotheist, God being always the self-revealing God, all jars and clashes between gospel and gospel, scripture and scripture, prophet and prophet, are an impossibility or an illusion. Variety must exist, because of the limitations within

which alone the self-expressions of God can be disclosed. And, rightly perceived and sympathetically judged, these varieties of expression beautifully flow into one another and become but one vivid reflection of God's charm. Now, as this self-expression of God in man becomes a living process, a conscious experience and enjoyment, naturally there springs up the trust and the avowal. 'Thou art enough for me'. I want nothing but my God: and my entire safety, my complete satisfaction, consists in His Providence. That is why there follows the passionate supplication, *Rudra yaththey lakshinam mukham*. *Rudra*: that deeply suggestive, that surpassingly striking, appellation of the Nameless One of a thousand names, noteworthy also for the wide variety of human sentiments which it evokes, extending from fear to awe—from fawning fear whose worship has self-security for its motive and incantation for its method to adoring awe whose worship has 'self-naughting' in the Holy One for its motive and rapt communion, transcending even praise and prayer, for its method. Ignoring the excesses of uncultured

fancy or unbridled impulse, the conception of *Rudra* may, in the main, be apprehended as signifying the God of Protection, the God of Redemption and the God of Sanctification. (1) *Rudra* is, surely, not the terrific, One who hurls the crushing bolt and darts the blasting flash. He is *Bhayanam Bhayam*--the Terror of terrors, the Terror unto the terrific, and hence the Refuge of the terror-stricken, *Gathih Praninam*. The world is too much with me; and I cast myself on His protection. I seek shelter in Him, even because I know He is the *Rudra* before whose all-vanquishing eye the hordes of temptations quail and flee. Unto appealing helplessness, unto expectant supplication, unto remorseful transgression, unto struggling aspiration, He extends the *abhaya-hastam*---the plighted security, the guaranteed support. The humble and the lowly, the wandering and the way-worn, do not fear Him as the Terrific; even the erring and the sinning do not shun Him as the Fearful. They do not say to him, 'do Thou leave us alone and keep apart from us'. In the dreary day of desertion, in the dark hour of reproach, they appeal to *Rudra* to turn His *dakshinamukam*,

His grace-lit face, towards them; for they know Him to be the supreme Protector of all that need protection. And their supplication is summed up in the prayer, 'Vouchsafe unto me Thy protection, not only from the ills of life, from the strifes and sufferings of the world, but also from that appalling plight when I shall fight shy of Thee and look askance at Thee.' (2) Then, Rudra is the God of Redemption. In Dr. Tagore's *Fruit-gathering* there is a most edifying song (XXXVI), describing three typical situations, which may, for convenience, be defined, in the language of medieval Christian theology, as 'the world,' 'the flesh,' and 'the devil.' There are the men 'mad in their mirth,' soiling the robe of the Beautiful; and the serious-minded pray that these be judged and punished. But the Beautiful One passes by them in pity, self-bereft as they are of the beauties of Nature. Next, there are those 'pitiless in their passion,' dis-honouring the Supreme Love; and the pure-hearted pray that these be struck down. But the all-judging One leaves them to the slow but sure decree of burning contrition —the pain of sleep-less

love, the fear of desolate night, the wound of violated faith. Lastly, there are those who break into the Lord's store-house to rob Him of His glory. These are the spiritual atheists—not the philosophic agnostics—who feel sufficient unto themselves, who find no place for God in their universe. The astonished world cries, 'Forgive them, O Terrible;' and Divine forgiveness takes the form of scattering storms and shattering thunder-stone and the angry red of the sunset. Thus does (Divine Splendour eclipse and Divine Grace absorb the petty, glimmering self-sufficiency of man.) Such are the ways of Redemption; and the true devotee prays to be protected from the privation, the devastation, of godlessness, by the Deity presenting Himself in the heart and the home as the all-engaging and all-satisfying One. (3) Finally, Rudra is the God of Sanctification. The dearest and profoundest desire of the human soul is to receive in quench-less love, and to render itself in deathless devotion to, a Being of Supreme Worth—a Being whose richness in Grace can never be measured out. The God of sublimest Sanctity, the God of absolute

Holiness alone can satisfy the deepest longings of the worshipper. Not homage to the God of Might, not submission to the God of Right, not even rapture for the God of Beauty, but reverence, in which blend adoring awe and self-losing fascination, for the God of Holiness, is the soul's divinest relationship to the Deity. *Rudra* with His *Dakshinamukham*—austere as Righteousness and captivating as Beauty in one, and that rare excellence carried to perfection—is the God of Holiness. 'Nameless beauties', observes a writer, 'rise into view (we may say, commingle) in Holiness'. Wisdom, goodness, beauty are unified, perfected, and made eternally absolute, by Holiness. And man's whole being renders itself in unquestioning, unconditioned devotion to the Holy One; reserving nothing, seeking nothing, for itself—in fact, disowning insulated, individual existence. God is the Awe-inspiring One before whom the soul prostrates itself in utter self-effacement; He is, likewise, the Fascinating One in whose adoration the soul loses itself in rapturous communion. The poet speaks of the soul, at the highest point, losing itself in light. It may be said that,

in devotion, the soul loses itself, at the deepest reach, in adoring awe. The beauty of Holiness so completely captivates the soul as to absorb all its capacity for love and devotion. Man's sole wish and prayer then is, 'Assume me and absorb me absolutely into Thee'. This vow, this covenant, is to be eternal—*mampahinilyam*. The human soul is 'wed in the eternal' to the Spouse divine. And this is the richest benediction that the Supreme One himself can vouchsafe to man to bless him with the transfiguring vision and the transporting joy of the beaming, benignant countenance of the All-Holly: *Rudra* of the *dakshinamukham*.

·ENJOY HIM ALONE·

(1925)

Commenting in his Autobiography upon the second part of the opening verse of the *Isopanishad*, *T'henathyakthena bhunjeedha*, the God-illumined Maharshi says: The holy sage of the Upanishad tells us, 'Enjoy what he has given unto thee.' And the Maharshi puts the question, 'What is it He has given to thee?'; and with the thrilling joy of personal experience he exclaims, 'Why, God has given unto thee Himself—Himself has God given unto thee! And He desires that we should enjoy Him.' That is the gift of God through the Brahma Samaj. Not that he has given the gift only to the Brahmos. They would be the worst of sectaries and the most hardened of unbelievers, if they ever imagined that God gave Himself only unto them. But, again, they would be the most pitiable of the misled, if they did not feel that the supreme dispensation of the Brahma Samaj consists in this, namely, that in a measure which knows no stint, in a

spirit which harbours no doubt, with a completeness which admits of no qualification and with an absoluteness which provides for no exception, the Brahma Samaj has been granted the grace to know and to declare that God is the sovereign Gift unto every soul in all ages and in all countries. All the approaches and avenues to the worship of the One Supreme God that went before the days of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy and all the expressions and confessions of the same faith since his days, find a point of meeting, a channel of confluence, in that life-mission that inspired message, of the Rajah, namely, that it is both possible for, and obligatory on, every person to worship the Supreme One without ceremonial limitations, without conventional substitutes. That is the saving gospel vouchsafed by God through what we call the Brahma Samaj. The honoured Ranade might say—and he was not wrong in saying—that the Rajah was only the nineteenth century successor unto an unbroken line of precursors who might all be accepted as the founders of the Theistic Church. Yet the Theistic Church, of which

he was the rallying-point and the radiant source differs from all previous dispensations even as the full-fledged life differs from the antecedent stages of existence. Different not in the sense of 'diverse' but in the sense, of 'higher and ampler,' the Brahma Samaj is the Theistic Church into which is infused all the inspiration of the past and out of which must proceed all the illumination of the future. As I say this, oh, do not think—I need hardly warn you not to think—that Ram Mohan was the Brahma Samaj, or Maharshi, or Brahmananda, or Sastri Mahasaya, or any other revered worthy, or even all of them put together. No; the Brahma Samaj is the Dispensation of God which, necessarily limited and bounded in and by its chosen prophets and elected apostles, reveals itself in progressive stages. The kernel, the vital seed, the nurturing tap-root of the whole is, however, there in the inner spirit of the Brahma Samaj. And that is the gospel that God has given and will give of Himself unto every man. All the distinguishing and soul-satisfying tenets of the Brahma Samaj are but natural corollaries, logical sequels,

unto that one fundamental principle of the Samaj.

When God gives Himself to us, it needs no stretch of imagination to perceive what it is that we get therein. Rather, it would be more to the point to ask ourselves what it is that we do not get, that we lack then. All the vital needs and essential requisites, the profoundest intuitions and the loftiest aspirations, the amplest sympathies and the richest services of man— all, all and more, immeasurably beyond that all, we find compressed in this one gift—God giving Himself unto one and all. And truly this is the most wonderful of gifts — a gift that makes the receiver divine! Herein lies one fundamental distinction between a gift and a present. A gift is possible only between kindred spirits. He that gives and he that receives are made one in the gift. Otherwise it would be only a present, a favour, a charity. A gift is that which makes the giver one with the receiver even as the receiver becomes one with the giver, through the act of giving and receiving. That is the essence of a gift. As he does

often, Emerson takes us to the heart of the matter when he observes, "The gift, to be true must be the flowing of the giver unto me, correspondent to my flowing unto him." We never ask why a gift is given. We never ask what it is intended for. It is in itself self-explained, self-justified, because it carries with it its own end and purpose. The end is that giver and receiver would, through the gift, realise their oneness; even as the purpose is to disclose that oneness. In every gift the giver gives himself and the receiver realises the giver. Say, I make you a gift. If at once that gift did not make you a permanent factor of my life and I did not become an inseparable element in your life, that gift should be a failure as a gift; it would be a mere memento. A gift is a vital, living object, not a mechanical thing. Its life, its essence, consists in this that giver and receiver are knit together by it. Thus, the vital link between God and man is that God is the giver and man is the receiver; and thus, God and man know and appraise each other as one. How can I receive a gift from God but as the God of Love? How can God

be a gift unto me unless He is my God? Love is (Emerson again) the genius and God of gift," and from love alone we can receive a gift. Another point is: a present is to be used, while a gift is to be enjoyed. A present is used to bring some other pleasure, while a gift is enjoyed for its own sake. As God gives Himself to us as a gift, He is not to be employed for any other purpose than the enjoyment of Himself. A third idea is: a present is used with the calculating consciousness of its use; a gift is enjoyed only as the enjoyer forgets himself in its enjoyment. Who can enjoy a thing and yet be conscious of himself? Thus, as God gives himself unto us, we enjoy him as a gift only as we forget ourselves, lose ourselves, annihilate ourselves as separate entities, in the enjoyment of God. Sweet-souled Sa'adhi has said: "As I was entering the garden, the friend said, 'Fetch me, as you return, a few flowers from the garden.' I went in, I enjoyed the garden. When I remembered my friend's request, I found myself outside the garden." The memory of a separate entity, the recollection of another object—that was

incompatible with the enjoyment itself. As enjoyment ceased, memory came up to the surface. In the enjoyment itself he could not remember. In remembering the friend, he lost the enjoyment. Also, let us incidentally remind ourselves that, even as God gives *Himself* unto us as a gift, nothing, in fact, is given by Him except as a gift; and we are forbidden from any word except to say, 'Whater Thou givest I receive; and as I receive Thee and Thy gifts, I render myself unto Thee; and in thus giving and receiving Thou and I do become one in truth.' These are the terms of every gift granted unto us by God. The gift can be a gift only when it is enjoyed in and for itself: and enjoyment is possible only when the enjoyer loses himself in the enjoyment. Finally, as the enjoyer loses himself in the enjoyment, he lives in the giver, because a gift has no significance except as the gift, the portion, the substance, the essence, of the giver, aye, no existence for the receiver, in fact, except as an expression of the giver. And as, in enjoying a gift, we must forget and lose ourselves, this forgetting and losing

comes to be only a negative name for living in the giver. Where do I forget and lose myself, and why? I am not eliminated but only taken up, assumed, monopolised, possessed wholly and completely; and that is why I forget myself. This absorption, it is clear, must be somewhere and in some one. Thus I lose myself in the giver; and he who loses himself in the giver becomes, according to the Science of the Spirit, integrated with the giver. There can be no losing in the Infinite Spirit except by being incorporated in the Spirit through time and through eternity. Thus there is here no losing of the self except by way of being integrated in God. And thus it all comes to be a complete circle of blessing: 'From Him, of Him, with Him, unto Him and in Him from eternity to eternity. God is our gift. We must enjoy Him. And as we enjoy Him, we must lose ourselves in Him. Further, such is the wonderful alchemy of enjoyment that with every single occasion of enjoyment we are enlarged, expanded and made fitter for intenser enjoyment. If thus every single experience of enjoyment fits us for larger enjoyment, this is the same as say-

ing that enjoyment is growth. And if there is the growth, where, again, is the losing? The seeming loss is a real gain; and as we lose ourselves, we lose not the real, central self but only the encasing self that the enjoyment might find a freer and larger scope for expansion. As Emerson has said, life is a circle which, from being a ring imperceptibly small, rushes out on all sides into newer and larger circles, and that, without end. That is the whole geometrical expansion—so to speak, the graphic presentation of the evolution—of life under the grace of God. Life is a self-evolving circle; and therefore, it is that there is an inner throb which keeps it growing and enlarging. It is true of all healthy life that it is a life of enjoyment. For, as Carlyle observes, the true test of health is that you are not aware that you have a body at all. The moment you feel that you have a body, your health has suffered. Therefore, a life of enjoyment is a life of growth: and unto this there is no limit. The so-called losing in God is a growth in the Eternal God: and were it otherwise, would it be a gift worthy of God or worth taking

from God? Where God once loves, He loves for ever. What God once grants He grants for ever. It knows no termination. It is an eternal gift from the Eternal God. And, therefore, we are eternal enjoyers of God. Ours is an eternal life of enjoyment; because, as enjoyers, we owe our enjoyment to the Eternal God. God has made me His eternal enjoyer. And finally, as the Giver gives and as the receiver receives, it means enjoyment; and this process means growth; and growth means further enjoyment and further growth. Then, what does it come to? The enjoyment is enjoyment by the Giver Himself. He would not give a gift that He would not enjoy. Who would make a gift of something which was unseemly, unsavoury, to himself? With God, it is the enjoyment of enjoyment. Man is only a co-enjoyer with God; and yet with this difference: I the man enjoy the gift: while God enjoys my enjoying it. Now we have the full meaning of the Upanishadic text known to us all, which tells how two lovely birds related to each other are seated on the same branch and the one enjoys the sweet fruit and the other sees and enjoys. Therein is God's eternal self-abnegation, bene-

ficence and goodness; and therein unto man is the triple guarantee of eternity, enjoyment in eternity and enjoyment of God in eternity. We enjoy; we enjoy God; and we enjoy God eternally; and in our enjoyment of Him eternally does God enjoy Himself. What need we more? Do I want truth and wisdom? I have my God. Do I want purity and holiness? My God. Do I want strength and stamina? My God. Do I want company and comradeship? My God. Do I want wealth and prosperity? My God. For everything, there is my God — my God, who makes me the heir of the past and the purveyor to the future; my God, who makes me *one*, a definite unit and not a negligible fraction, in his vast family. This enjoyment of God — do not call it life. Life is only the process of enjoyment. The gift is God. And as we enjoy him more and more, we see that it is a gift with a marvellous virtue never, never decreased. It cannot decrease, but it increases, with enjoyment. All other things abate with use; but this heavenly gift increases with enjoyment. God, as He gives Himself, grants us that which is imperishable, inexhaustible, interminable, inexpressibly sweet, indescrib-

ably engaging, ineffably enrapturing.

Gladness, then, is the only spirit proper unto us in life — not hilarity; not the mere impulse of excited merriment; but the opposite of sadness. We may be pensive; we may be solemn; we may be, at times, grieved, pained or depressed. But sadness is distinguishable from these as darkness is from eclipse. Darkness sees no plan in existence. Darkness cannot be in the light of the sun. Pensiveness — a dash, a streak, of grief — there might be; but sadness is unwarranted in the Kingdom of God. For, sadness is the darkness of spirit; and darkness and spirit are no more homogeneous, no more reconcilable, than night and day. The God of Grace gifts Himself unto man in a spirit of gladness, *mangalam*. In the realisation of God there is no other reciprocity of feeling possible between soul and soul than each soul pronouncing the self-same benediction *mangalam*, upon all.

This is the gift that the Brahma Samaj has, not brought, but pointed to us. The Brahma Samaj, as a church, as a congregation, as a community, only points, shows,

discloses. But it is the Brahmo individually that must receive it, retain it and enjoy it. Thus it is that the Brahmo is to the Brahma Samaj the witness, and the Brahma Samaj is to the Brahmo the verification. I witness it as a Brahmo; and the Brahma Samaj verifies it for me. It verifies itself through me as one definite, concrete witness. Thus this gift is not unto the Brahma Samaj except in and through and for each Brahmo. And as the reciprocity indicates, this gift is unto each Brahmo for the sake of, and unto the vital existence of, the Brahma Samaj. The Brahma Samaj verifies it for me; but only when there is the inner witness in me do I feel invigoratingly reassured as it is verified in the Brahma Samaj. Thus God is a gift unto every man for himself and unto humanity through every man for the eternal weal of the whole of humanity. This gospel is the gift of the Brahma Samaj. Let us receive it with all the solemnity, reverence, gratitude and gladness appropriate to it.

THE PILGRIM SOUL-

(1925)

Fellow-worshippers of our common God
and Father,

I shall now say a few words on a very
important—rightly understood, a very illumi-
nating—theme. I am unworthy of it; yet I
do hold it dear, and I bring it to you as a
humble gift.

My subject, as you have noticed it
announced, is: 'The Pilgrim Soul'. I shall
just repeat four lines about it which we owe
to that far-famed mystic devotee, Madame
Guyon :

'Refuse not, pilgrim, what men ask of
thee—
Love, labour, life; give all, and give it free.
When in thy satchel naught remains but
death,
Know that thine own and take it for thy
fee'.

* At the Southern India Brahma Samaj Mandir,
Madras (25—6—'33).

That is the pilgrim soul. It is not possible for me to improve upon the characterisation. I can only endeavour to say a few words by way of illustration and amplification.

Here is the duty of the pilgrim; and here also is the reward of the pilgrim. Man is defined in various ways at different times according to his interests. But all that is with reference to the world of sense or thought, of pleasure or profit, of self-acquisition or self-satisfaction. Yet there is, over and above these, the world of self-realisation. And in it, man is not, as we often fancy he is, merely a worker or a researcher, a weather-seeker or a knowledge-acquirer. He is rather a pilgrim. In that highest world, the world of self-realisation and self-perfection in God, man is nothing if not a pilgrim. It would be a most illuminating theme to think of God Himself as the Great Pilgrim. How wonderfully opposites do meet in Him: always at rest and always moving; here yet everywhere; unconcerned and untouched yet indwelling and intimate! It is this that makes God the Great Pilgrim. To the query, 'Where art Thou?', comes

from Him the answer, 'In thy heart.' And, again, to that other query, 'Where art Thou not?', the ready reply is, 'Nowhere.' Thus thought cannot travel and imagination cannot keep pace; for, He outsoars both. After all our exhausting journey, when we come back to self, He has been, we find, with us only. It is the self that forgets to realise God as the Great Pilgrim. Then, to forget myself is to gain the sense of God as the Great Pilgrim coming into me with every twinkle of the eye. Says Madame Guyon, those who are thought-less bathe at the pool and the fountain; but these who are truly wise with 'the wisdom that is from above'—they bathe in the ever-flowing current of the Pilgrim God. That theme of the Pilgrim God ever marching on and on is a theme forbidden to man, much more to a frail creature like me. Hence must we limit ourselves to a few simple reflections upon Man the Pilgrim.

There was an Inspector of Schools examining a class of boys. 'Let us have some word-meanings,' he said; and he put them the question, 'Who is a pilgrim?' The answer given by one was: 'A person who

goes from place to place.' 'Oh, says the Inspector, 'I was at a certain place yesterday. You see I am here today. And I shall be at some other place tomorrow. Am I a pilgrim, then?' And out comes the explanation, 'No, sir; because a pilgrim is a good man.' That is the distinction between all other travellers and a pilgrim. He is not voyaging for sight-seeing; but he is the eternal wayfarer going to the City of God, companioned by God Himself and doing what a man of God can alone dare to do. He need not go far; he may remain at home. Yet his soul is travelling towards God. Therefore, he is a pilgrim.

These, then, are the characteristics of a pilgrim. He has a holy aim in view. And as to possessions, he has none. One who carries a big load of necessities with him is not a pilgrim. The true pilgrim has nothing but his staff and a little satchel into which he apparently puts what all he gets but from which, indeed, he takes out whatever he has to give. His final goal is only the adoration of God. 'Thou art my God;' says Madame Guyon, 'when once I can say it, that is

enough. It fills me with a holy content; and I need nothing else.' Again, in every country there are places of pilgrimage. The people that visit them go not there for pleasure or enjoyment or learning or trafficking. The pilgrim has nothing to do with such secular objects, his one only aim being to get into closer touch with God. The place of pilgrimage is there to draw us closer to God, to make us feel that we are not wanderers but dear ones of God meant to be with our God. In consonance with this object of realising God, the pilgrim's whole life becomes a joy. Can you think of a pilgrim quarrelling and bargaining? No; the pilgrim treads his path with a song on his lips. As Madame Guyon has it, the pilgrim's eyes

'With blissful tears are overbrim;
In every sound he finds a hymn.'

Next, wonderful as it is, a pilgrim is one without home, because he has a home everywhere. Wherever he is, he is at home. Above time, above clime, wherever God is, there is his home. A pilgrim is one of that class of persons whom you cannot make homeless. Take

thought of the pilgrim's homelessness and pity him; he says, 'No; I *have* a home.' He is always at home, joyful and always going on towards his great goal. Then again, in other kinds of journey, there is a desire to outstrip one's companions. But the pilgrim keeps company right through. Having nothing, he owns all. He is one never in want. And such a person alone can say, 'I will give to the world what the world asks.' Hence the injunction,

'Refuse not, pilgrim, what men ask of
thee—
Love, labour, life; give all, and give it
free.'

What is the meaning of this? To take a single instance, Father Damien went and gave his love and labour to the lepers and gave them his life, too; for he died a leper there; and he gave it all *free*. We are told by those who give useful information about the derivations of words that 'free' is connected with Sanskrit *priya* and therefore stands for 'out of love.' When you give out of love, it is a gift. Otherwise, it is but a barter. Thus the pilgrim soul shall 'give all, and give it free'—

give love and give that labour which is the fruit of love and, more than that, the expression and abode of life. And we are further told,

‘When in thy satchel naught remains
but death,
Know that thine own and take it for
thy fee.’

That is marvellous, isn't it? The fruit of the pilgrim's life is to be death! He is going to achieve death with all his love and labour! He would expect much more — tangible, agreeable, attractive — than death. Of course, the wages of *sin* is death, says the proverb. Yet the man of God is going to get the same death! Then, is it not giving up the whole thing? By no means. Death is the wages of sin in that, as the penalty of sin, the man of sin dies to God, to all that is immortal. But to the pilgrim who is to get death, the verse does not say, ‘Take it as thy reward,’ but ‘Take it as thy fee’: it is thy possession, not thy penalty. What really is ‘fee’? It is not wages, not salary, not payment, not reward, not compensation; but a token of appreciation of services rendered. In

English Law, it is said, no barrister can go into court and claim his 'fee'; rather, whatever the actual practice, he is supposed to go and give the free benefit of his knowledge to the aggrieved party and help the cause of justice. The fee that follows is only a token of appreciation. So death is only the fee, in that sense, unto the pilgrim of love and labour. What is this death, the fee of the pilgrim? You can put it in various forms. Among the old Norsemen, there was a word which meant home-going: that was death. Therefore, it is 'returning home'. There is a Hindi song from Kabir which refers to death as 'Narayanki hukum' (God's summons). Thus, death for the pilgrim is not 'Perish thou', as in the case of the sinner, but 'Well done, good and faithful servant; welcome, dear son'. And the song continues, 'Chalo langoti.....' Give up everything, gird up and go. And, in fact, that is the whole aim, the sole passion, of the pilgrim from the beginning. Abraham, the patriarch of the Jewish nation, used to be called the 'Friend of God'. When the call of death came to him, he exclaimed, 'What else can a friend do?

My Divine Friend is calling me closer to Himself — not for perpetual rest, because I am already and always at rest ; but for closer, nearer, more intimate communion'. That is death — far from terrific but, on the other hand, all too welcome. Says Saadi: When you are born, you come crying, while all around are smiling ; but when you die, see to it that you die smiling, while all around are sobbing. Death is loss only unto those left behind, not unto the pilgrim himself who has gone or has to go ahead. Indulge thyself: it is not life to live ; but give thyself: it is not death to die. As Alexander Pope has put it in one of his tense expressions, to the pilgrim of faith death is only languishing into life—going away into life, collapsing (as it were) into life. That death which means richer life, ampler vision, higher aspiration—that is the fee of the pilgrim soul.

Now, I have merely scratched the surface significance of the pious stanza before us. Man a pilgrim—not a random Wayfarer ; not an aimless wanderer ; not a party in a caravan, in a military raid or even in a

scientific excursion ; but a member of the eternal choir to sing the song of God : Thou art my God ; and my eyes with blissful tears shall be overbrim, and in every sound I shall find a hymn. The Whole world is his possession which he has to give and to enjoy only in giving. What a sordid way of using a picture it must be to put it in your pocket ? It is said of the chief of a certain primitive tribe in Africa that, when a sundial was presented to him, he thought the best use he could make of it was to put it quietly in his box instead of exposing and exhibiting it to the world. Of what use were love, aye, how barren were life itself, if not given to others ? Give your life, even because you are urged by inner affection to give it. And if in thy satchel naught remains but death, know it to be thine own and take it for thy fee. In the days of Christian prosecution, a certain heretic was being tortured on the rack. His only utterance then was, 'Beloved, I come to Thee'. In his last days, Brahmananda Kesab Chandra Sen was afflicted with an excruciating kind of physical pain. As he is rolling about

from side to side upon his bed in agony, his heart-broken mother exclaims, 'Such a godly son! And yet why all this suffering for him? Perhaps, poor me, it is *my* sins that are thus visited upon my cherished offspring!' 'No, mother;' he answers in gentle accents, 'you have ever been a good, an exemplary mother. The Heavenly Mother is only rocking me in the cradle of pain with her own hand, even as I am going into a new childhood in the Beyond,' 'Narayankihukum' 'Narayanakicheeti'—God's summons, God's warrant—he hears it and he responds to it. That is perfection; that is realisation. May He vouchsafe it unto us!

THE ASCENTS OF DEVOTION*

(1933)

Fellow-worshippers of God,

This evening, as our contemplation of our relationship with God and as our meditation upon our sense of intimate contact with Him, we will reflect on, study and ponder over, one verse from a well-known work genercally ascribed to Sree Sankaracharya. Some doubt his authorship of *Sivanandalahari*; and the doubt seems based on the supposition that the Father of an uncompromising Monistic Philosophy could not consistently be the soul that thus pours itself forth in rapturous, ecstatic praise and devotion. I do not share this doubt; but feel that we can accept the widespread belief that Sree Sankara is the author of that sublime century of devotional verse.

Let me first repeat the verse we are now to dwell upon.

* At the Southern India Brahma Samaj Mandir, Madras (6—8—'33).

*Ankolam nijabeejasanthathi, rayaskantho-
 palam soochika,
 sadhvee nayjavibhum, latha kshithiruham,
 sindhussaridvallabham,
 prapnothecha yadha, thadha Pasupatheh
 paJaravindadwayam,
 Methovrutthirupethya thishtathi sada sa
 bhakthirithyucchathe.*

This is what they denote as *Bhakti*: As the seed of the *ankola* tree attains the original stalk, as the needle attains the magnet, as the devout wife attains the honoured lord, as the creeper attains the tree, as the river attains the sea, as these attain their respective objects in this world, so, fixing itself intently upon the lotus-feet of the Lord of creatures, the spirit of the devotee remains for ever firm and happy. This is Sankara's definition of *Bhakti*. It is not quite the same as in the *Bhaktisutras* of Narada. There *Bhakti* means devotion to God through the sentiment of love as distinguished from the path of the understanding in enlightenment or of the will in service. Here it stands for the progress of the soul towards or unto the Lord,

How is the soul to be attached to the Lord? Sankara gives five illustrations. As the full-grown, native seed of the *ankola* tree clings, as it falls down, back to the parent stalk; as the needle feels drawn to the magnet; as the chaste, true wife is embraced to the beloved of the heart; as the creeper twines itself around the sustaining stem; and as the ever-eager current flows ceaselessly towards the sea, so the soul seeks repose in, and finds its fullest existence in, the contemplation of, and devotion to, God. These comparisons are plain enough. The *ankolam* is said to be a tree with this peculiarity, that immediately its seed falls to the ground, it clings to the base of its trunk almost instinctively. The needle-magnet principle is a familiar phenomenon. You remember Carlyle's application of this comparison to the irresistible attraction between Boswell and Johnson. Place any amount of rubbish in between; and yet each will be drawn to the other. The mariner's compass always points to the lodestar of all lode-stones—the polar star. Then, the way in which faithful wife and cherished husband cohere to each

other is a familiar idea. Next, there is the idea of the creeper turning itself around a branch of another creeper: that also is well-known. You know how such have become sacred objects, like the mistletoe. Again, the flow of the river towards the sea has been the theme of innumerable poems. You may recall that famous passage in Rabindranath Tagore's *Sadhana* in which the river, even from the beginning when it starts on its career, is described as leaping forward with the one song, 'I am for the sea.' All these mean one thing in common—the irresistibility of attraction. The *ankola* seed will go nowhere but must go back to the foot of its own stem. The needle can never divorce itself from the magnet. The true wife can never think of the possibility of separate existence apart from her spouse. The creeper not only depends for its vitality on, but owes its very life to, the tree around which it entwines itself. Science tells you of parasites in the vegetable and in the animal kingdom. And it is a fact of actual experience in either of these spheres that if the 'host' dies, the parasite dies also. The latter derives all its nutri-

tion from the former. As for the river, it is no river that does not go into the sea but exhausts itself before it reaches the goal.

All these examples are brought into use by the great sage to illustrate how there subsists an interminable, immortal relation, beginning with proximity and closing with identity, between the human and the Divine. These are not to be treated as mere variants of the same thing. They present, rather, the several stages in the ascent of the soul to God. *Bhakti* is not 'Oh God, I am in Thee; I am in Thee'. It begins with the consciousness of God and ends—if it may be said to know any end at all—with absorption in God. And all the intervening stages in this progress are beautifully illustrated by the series of similes before us. (1) Why the *ankola* seed goes and touches and, as it touches, clings fast to the foot of its own stem, as though by instinct, we cannot tell. Probably, there is something in the trunk or some innate urge in itself. Anyhow, this marks the prime, initial, elementary stage. (2) There is the next step at which a mutual relation of conscious approximation to each

other starts. Something there is imbedded in the nature and substance of the two objects which draws the needle to the magnet, (3) Proceeding further to the *sadhvi* and the *vibhu*, we come to a reciprocity in which—unlike in the earlier stages of a powerful pull on one side and passive obedience on the other—each finds her or his being in love of the other. Illustrative of this, we have any number of beautiful stories both historic and mythical. You have heard that story of a mutually loving couple in which, referring to another couple, the husband says, ‘How faithful must have been that wife! When she heard her husband had passed away, she went and drowned herself in a well.’ Gently observes the wife, ‘Yes; that was very good, indeed. But it is not the perfect ideal.’ ‘How do you mean?’ ‘Why, that woman should not have needed the act of going and throwing herself into a well in that position.’ The husband wanted to make a trial, went a hunting and got up a story that he was killed by a tiger. Says the messenger sent in charge of the report, ‘Madam, your husband has been carried away by a tiger.’

'Aha!' she exclaims and instantly drops down dead on the spot. *There* is the completion, the climax, the perfection of conjugal adherence. Nanak, the Sikh *guru*, has a fine illustration. Set a mixture of milk and water upon the fire; not a drop of the milk shall be touched or spirited away until the last drop of the water has been evaporated. That is the mutual devotion of wife and husband. (4) Then, there is the creeper and the stem relation in which the one thrives only so long as it is in touch with the other. (5) Lastly, there is no real river at all until it reaches and pours itself into the sea; and thus the *jeevatma* exists not at all but in the *Paramatman*.

These distinct stages of advancement in *bhakti* are otherwise represented by four familiar keywords in our national vocabulary of spiritual life. (i) There is the *salokyam* of the domicile living in the same territory and breathing the same atmosphere. (ii) Next, there is *sameeepyam*, that is getting into nearness, vicinity, proximity. (iii) A higher state is *saroopyam*, in which the external, symbolic

form itself presents some similarity. You remember the wise observation that who has seen the son has seen the father. Yes; there must needs develop at least some features of resemblance between the one and the other. Even friendship is formed to lead to a number of such similarities, in respect of such outward characteristics also as movement and deportment, between friend and friend; and most of all is this the case between the truest of friends, namely, husband and wife. There is thus a similarity in spiritual form between the Deity and the devotee. What is prominent in God becomes the characteristic as well of the soul; so that the saying of Jesus receives abundant confirmation in that the Father is reproduced in the Son. (iv) Highest of all is *sayujyam*—inseparability, clinging together; being yoked together. It is a profound saying in the Koran—that in which God is reported to have said to Mahammad and, through him, to say to all else, 'We have created thee for Our delight.' A certain Sufi has observed 'The God who loves me is *me*; and I, who love God, am *God*—two forms but one soul! And then comes the thought-

arresting, significant statement, 'He who has seen me has seen God; he who has seen Him both Him and me'. So are God and man intertwined or interfused or intermingled. This flow of the river into the sea is ordinarily called absorption. We have queer notions about it, as when we say it is like salt lost in water. What the sages mean is that it is the highest beatitude wherein there is no consciousness except the consciousness of God—not annihilation in God but complete occupation with God, being wholly taken up with God. Saadi has a fine illustration. He says he was going into a flower-garden. A friend said, 'Bring me some flowers.' And he answered, 'Yes.' He went into the garden and was so absorbed in it with all its beauty and fragrance. When he remembered his friend's request and his own promise, he found himself just outside the garden. So long as he was inside, he was absorbed in enjoyment. It is not the loss of self-consciousness but its expansion into cosmic consciousness where man is still living but as an all-absorbed entity enjoying the beatitude of God. Tennyson, in his *In Memoriam*, tells

how two companion souls merge into oneness with each other;

“Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to noble ends.”

Losing oneself in the love-light of God—that is absorption: not the complete wiping out of the sense of ‘I’ but the completion of the finite ‘I’ in the recognition of the Infinite ‘I’.

The first of the several stages in the pilgrimage of the soul, Sankara, with all the great teachers, calls *salokyam*—the enjoyment of the company of the Deity. The next, *sameeepyam*, he says, is *namasankeerthanam*. *Saroopyam*, he calls worship. Finally, *sayujyam* is *dhyanam* and *kaivalyam* — bliss and beatitude. There is nothing after it, as even in ordinary talk we use *kevalam* to signify the idea ‘unrelieved.’ To put the whole thing in another way. In the first stage, there is the sense of awareness of God, as in the *ankola* seed seeming to know its own resting-place. After that comes attraction, as of the needle and the magnet. Next, attachment as

between the wife and the husband. Then, adherence, as of the creeper to the parent stalk. Lastly, absorption, as of the river in the sea. Sankara gives a hint elsewhere why it is that *bhakti* springs at all in the human breast. That is because, he says, God has planted in it the sense that it is made for His *kreedā*, rapturous enjoyment. All the creatures of the universe are His '*kreedamrugah*', sport-animals — not in the bestial sense but in the fascinating sense of, say, pet-fawns or darling *kokils*. For the Divine all-inclusiveness, all beings are animals of enjoyment. Hence the significance of that verse in Blake's poem which says it is the same Hand that has shaped the fiery heart of the tiger and the meek heart of the lamb—not the one for cruelty and the other for tenderness but both to be unified into one arena for Divine enjoyment. As God has thus created the universe for His *kreedā*, so the response must come from man. If we may try, though inadequately and imperfectly, to denote the progress of this response in Sanskrit terminology, it starts with *rakti*, then evolves into *bhakti*; and when the response of *bhakti* infuses itself

into *rakti*, there is *vimukti* — not redemption into aught like the Euclidian ‘point’ which has no ‘parts’, but freedom from restraint, being always at home with God, one with God. We talk of ‘atonement’ in the secular or the theological sense; but it is far from that: it is atonement in the spiritual sense of at-one-ment. A certain Persian mystic has said, ‘I have come to see the two as one’. And how? ‘Because,’ he says, ‘I seek the One; I like the One, I see the One; I call upon the One.’ So, seeking, wishing, seeing and calling upon — all this is about the One, the only One, among the many — the One at the beginning and at the end, outside and inside. So, too, sings the modern poet of *The Higher Pantheism*:

“And the ear of man cannot hear,
 and the eye of man cannot see;
 But if we could see and hear this
 Vision—were it not He?”

That is the culmination, the fructification, the *summum bonum* of *bhakti* — all included in, embraced in, fused into, One. May God, in His mercy, vouchsafe that blessing unto us!

'THE LEPER'S BRIDE' AND

'ROMNEY'S REMORSE'*

Beloved fellow-worshippers of God,

Instead of a set discourse, I shall endeavour to address to you a few humble thoughts and sentiments derived from, or suggested by, two short poems of Tennyson. I presume that some of you are already acquainted with these poems; and I request those who are not yet familiar with them to bestow, if they choose, even this day a contemplative half-hour upon them. The two poems are called *Happy The Leper's Bride* and *Romney's Remorse*. As the ground-work, I shall state in a few brief words the skeleton story of each.

The story of the first poem is briefly this. There was a fine-spirited, young man, by name, Ulric. He married a young woman from pure mutual love. On the day of the wedding, they planted a rose bush to commemorate the solemn event. They lived happily

* at Cocanada.

together as man and wife. An evil-souled neighbour, a Count, cast lustful eyes upon the young wife. In order to get his wicked wish satisfied, he went and whispered to her that her husband was faithless to her and was wooing his wife and that, therefore, Ulric's wife and himself must conspire to take revenge. At once she became smitten with jealousy. So, in order to rouse jealousy in her husband, who she thought and misthought was wronging her, she allowed the wicked person to kiss her on the brow in Ulric's presence. Ulric's whole life now became frozen towards her. A chill set in between the two, though they could well have cleared up matter by a little explanation. The unhappy relations continued. Losing the charm of the home, he became a crusader, as was the general custom in those days, donned the crusader's war-dress, mounted his horse and was about to leave, when, plucking a pair of roses from the plant of the marriage-morn, the woman made up to him and presented them to him. He took them silently, though with a frown, and kissed them and flung them to the ground. She picked up the flowers thus thrown away

and kept them as sacred mementos. And he, abroad, went to the Holy Land, fought nobly, won victory and fame, caught leprosy and returned home a leper. And, according to the all too rigid segregation rules of the day, he was removed from society; and in conformity with the prescribed church ritual, he was taken to the church and there the priest solemnly proclaimed him dead and flung the mould of earth upon his feet; and he sang the psalm, 'Lord Thou hast liberated me!' because the dead man is he who is liberated from the flesh. But unseen of him, while kneeling beside his bier, the good wife heard it and in her own song, changed the prayer of the solitary *me* into the married *us*: 'Lord, Thou hast liberated us!' The man was taken far beyond human habitation and forbidden not only from coming into human society but even from opening his mouth. So he accepted his severe solitude, none nearing him, none talking to him. But the devoted wife took the old pair of roses and approached him nearer and nearer. He only beckoned and made signs to her not to come near. She says, 'I am not to come near you, because

you think my beauty will be tainted and marred by it?' She feels in the warning a bitter touch of reproach implying, 'That beauty which you sold to another, why tarnish it now by my touch?' Yet she persists "*I will* draw near. I have brought our old roses for you. I have long since changed your psalm in the church from the solitary 'me' into the married 'us'. The leper plague is upon you. But it can never mar my beauty. All will be well, if I lose it and myself in the higher beauty which is yours. I come to be by you, united for ever with you as your wife." The husband is moved; and still he tells her to keep aloof but asks her to fling the roses to him, as he is willing to take them; only, she must not come near, because that beauty which has remained dear as the beauty of a faithful wife must not be tarnished by the leper's touch. But she repeats she has come to be one with him and declares she never loved him more while a young and fair maid herself and she can now have no life apart from his, for she must find her life in and with him alone. Then he beckons her to come a little nearer. She says it is invitation

enough and, drawing closer, tells him that, while he was away on the Crusade, she was once out in the open with a furious storm blowing over her and she knelt in the storm before the God riding over it and prayed that the blue bolt of the storm might not descend upon the head of her beloved husband; and while she was thus engaged in praying not for her own but for her husband's safety, the old tempter came again and she clapped her hands in open disregard and the thunderbolt descended upon him and instantly reduced him to dust. Thus her soul has been purified through self-abnegation and by the preservation of her husband and the destruction of the tempter. With this, she avers again, 'I must live in, and find my life only with, you,' throws herself into his embrace and adds, 'Kiss me; I am come to live and die with you in the name of the everlasting God.' That is a splendid picture of the process of Love—the great sanctifier and unifier. God sanctifies the human soul and unifies it with the Divine even through the mighty power of Love. Why does He yearn and long eternally to save us? Because He loves us. In our

narrow, purblind vision, we turn away from Him. But the day of redemption comes when we plunge into the sacred fount of penitence and come back to be reunited with the supplication, 'I come to find my life in Thee, oh my eternal God, to live with Thee whose touch can give me life.' It boots us little to feel ourselves sad, if we only say, 'I am sorry I have done the wrong thing.' That is a sentiment all too poor. Rather, it must be one of 'I want my God; and no satisfaction can be mine till I have obtained my God.' The contrite wife goes back to the deserted husband, not alone to comfort and succour him, but to redeem and realise herself thereby. And the husband discloses himself to her as a pure and sacred spirit in whom there is no pollution, no taint. It is for the soul thus to go to God with the confession and the supplication, 'I am proud; I am self-sufficient. Take me; absorb me; and grant me eternal existence.' Such is the return offering of love to the beckoning gift of love.

To turn now to the other story. Romney is an artist. He marries and has a little

daughter. But he has heard Sir Joshua Reynolds, the greatest artist of the day, say that marriage mars the artist. And now, under the influence of "the master's apothegm that wife and children drag an artist down," he grows indifferent to them. They are no longer objects of interest to him, if at all he thinks of wife and babe. Hereafter, art becomes the sole idol in whose worship he neglects the supreme duty of loving and serving the wife and the child. Leaving the family, he goes away and completely absorbs himself in art for years and years. No thought is wasted by him upon them. In the heavy, enforced widowhood of the wife, the baby so dear to her heart dies. She, nevertheless, continues to cherish the old love for her husband undimmed and untarnished. He paints many a masterpiece and grows in fame as a marvellous painter. Thus he attains his object in life. But in this monomania, he loses his balance of mind and becomes almost a maniac. Weak, worn-out, exhausted, feverish, half-crazy, he returns to the dear Mary whom he has long since deserted. But he is half-insane and cannot realise the

surroundings. He thinks himself to be in a hospital. In semi-lucid moments, he asks, 'Where are my pictures? What is this new, unexpected scenery around me?' Turning to the wife tending him in the homely surroundings, he enquires, 'Are you a nurse hired to attend upon me?' And soon, racking his memory, he adds, 'I remember to have seen you in a church years ago.' Proceeding, he says, 'You look so kind that you will not deny my sultry throat one draught of icy water.' The sorrowing wife weeps the tender tears of melting affection. They fall upon his brow; and he thinks them to be ice-cold drops of water shed upon his burning brow to soothe him. But shortly he exclaims, 'Are they tears? Who are you to shed tears?' Then, the consciousness comes back entire, and there is the clear recognition, 'O Mary, Mary,' with the confession, 'To you my days have been a lifelong lie grafted on half a truth.' 'Where am I?' he asks. 'If I have ascended the summits of worldly fame, I have descended into the depths of spiritual darkness.' Thus the tears of the forgiving one evoke the remorse of the erring one. Madame Guyon has said,

‘I have no punishment to fear;
 But ah! that smile from Thee
 Imparts a pang, far more severe
 Than woe itself would be.’

Unto the penitent soul, there is, indeed, no punishment to fear. It is all the paradise of at-one-ment vouchsafed through the purgatory of pain and suffering. Accordingly, it is forbidden to say at the Footstool of Grace, ‘Oh God, do not inflict punishment upon me.’ The irresistible impulsion from within is, rather “Thou wilt not punish. Thou art not the offending God that would repel but the inviting God that would cleanse.” Yes; the filth-filled child runs up to the mother. The mother receives it with open arms and with the soothing call, ‘Come, darling,’ and sets about the cleansing, though the child cries the while in impatience. The loving mother who says the impure child must be made pure — not the pure mother who says the impure child cannot be touched — she baptises the child into purity. In Tennyson, it is the tears from the tender wife that evoke remorse. There is no blasphemy, if we add it is not merely the smile of the mother that

evokes remorse but it is also the tears of the Mother that elicit remorse. If there is no anthropomorphism, no materialisation, in giving God a smile, we need not be afraid of giving Him a tear either. The tear of the mother is from the heart of the mother; while the smile of the mother is from the spirit of nature in the mother. The tear is to awaken; whereas the smile is to resume, to take back and to embrace. Thus awakened into remorse, all his old memory comes back to Romney. He says, 'I never did forget you. Looking upon the pictures of the Madonna with the Divine Child upon her lap, I was thinking of you and your babe.' This is what is called *Darshan*—the vision of the Divine in the human; the graveyard of memory reawakened into a vivid experience of the present God. Then, as becomes the second characteristic of the rejuvenated soul, the remorseful artist says, 'Now, I will paint you. My art—my box, colours, tools, skill and all, I dedicate assiduously unto you. I beg the favour of your just giving me a sitting'. And then, he says, 'Less profile! turn to me—three-quarter face'. Further on, you get the panting utterance of the soul:

'I would picture you, figure you in myself full face'. Thus, too, says the penitent sinner to his God, 'My beloved God, I want Thy full face; do Thou conceal nothing from me'. The next moment, 'A child had shamed me at it. The whole power and skill has gone out of me. I can't paint you. This art that harlot-like seduced me from you leaves me harlot-like.' Similarly, who can paint God? The more strenuous the effort, the more enlarged and the more baffling in dimensions the Infinite becomes. Finally, 'I am content with being before you,' says Romney. At last, too, comes to the soul the great revelation: 'Why should I strive in vain to paint or to describe, while the vision itself is before me?' That is the vision of Worship—ultimately the real reason why the monotheist says no worship is possible except in spirit. Not that the idolater is a sinner and I am a saint; but who can paint, who can symbolise, who can picture the Vision of the Infinite? At last there comes the final stage unto the penitent sinner: 'O let me lean my head upon your breast.' So he finds his peace, his repose, in Righteousness. And the conclusion here takes

us back to the closing note of the first poem, 'I come to live with you'. The penitent, restored to His God, rests in the assured hope that forgiveness reaches up to heaven and thence is reflected to bring shining light to the forgiven. The grace of God, reaching up to heaven, is reflected back as the bliss of God in penitence, because God's light shineth direct upon the darkness of the world. That is what we mean by '*Thamasomajyothirgamaya*' (Lead us out of the gloom of the self into the light of the Eternal.) As Lowell has told us how Love's forgetfulness is Beauty's death, the artist forgot love, and so beauty—the capacity to realise and reproduce beauty—died out in spite of the so-called skill. Again, as love was restored, the little, narrow cells of 'Thou' and 'I', 'I' and 'Thou', were by the mystic key of Love flung open into the boundless beyond of Heaven's palace-gate. That is the soul's redemption, the soul's salvation. As the artist says in his remorse, there is no sin equal to black infidelity. 'The murderer, the adulterer, is less of a sinner than I; because, if he has lost salvation, he has at least gained something, while I have lost salvation for a mere

sketch in paint and colour!’ Thus the true, penitent sinner says, ‘No sinner like me; no saviour like God.’ As two complementary aphorisms in Sanskrit put it, except me where is Thy suppliant and except Thee where is my Saviour in the three worlds of spirit, mind and matter? As the suppliant in self-suppressing plaint prostrates himself before God, the prostration is transmuted into exaltation; and the soul can say with the emphasis of a joy of which all other joy is but a faint echo, ‘I have found my God.’

RELIGION AND LIFE*

(1928)

That inspiring American poet, James Russell Lowell, has a beautiful little poem to which he gives the name of 'A Parable.' The substance of the piece is this. There was a certain person who believed in God, worshipped God, and humbly served God, but could not realise the presence of God with clearness and certainty. So he leaves his neighbourhood, ascends a lofty hill and there, turning to God, says, 'Thou art not to be found in homesteads and meadows. This sublime hill-top is Thy abode; hence I have toiled my way up here. As unto the prophets of old Thou didst reveal Thyself in unmistakable signs, amidst thunder and lightning, through fire and cloud, so do Thou now reveal Thyself unto me through some sure sign that will bring me the assurance and the joy of

* At the Brahmopasana Mandir, Coçanada, on the eve of the organisation of the Brahma Samaj Centenary Celebrations in Andhradesa (13-7-28).

direct vision'. Having offered this prayer, he presses his ear against a rock and awaits the traditional thunder and lightning. There is no stir in the air, no throb in the earth, till, weary and disappointed, he opens his hungry eyes. The crust of moss gathered there has split; and through the crevice there peeps up a charming violet flower. His heart is moved with the grace of the Lord. And he exclaims, 'Thou living God, Thou dost manifest Thyself in this way. This violet that has rent its way through the granite brings me the impressive message of Living God that His holy spirit thus surges up in every life through oppressive circumstances. Thou art manifest even in this violet. But in the blindness of my faithless soul, I failed to recognise Thee, when my daughter produced a similar violet and presented it to me as having grown in our own court-yard; I could not. I disdained to see Thee in that homely violet. And I plodded up here to be informed and illumined by Thee through the same lovely violet. Thou art present in my very home, if only I, possess the heart to receive Thee.'

Now, that is the true mission of Religion—

not to take us out into vain wanderings far and wide in search of God, but to disclose unto us the truth and the joy that our dear God dwells with and in us, in our homes and in our hearts. They lived in the infant stage of the spirit's growth who sought God in signs, marvels and miracles. They that are fostered into a fuller life in God know that He is, not there on the distant mountain-top, but here within the very familiar yet not commonplace homestead where our lot is cast and our duty is done. This is the real function of Religion: to make God the God of daily life, of the common happenings of our being. If the sinner is to endure the anguish of remorse, if the saint is to enjoy the ecstasy of communion, if the little babe, appealing with his lisp, is to grow into the eloquence of wisdom, if the friend is to be close-knit heart to heart in steadfast sympathy, if the foe is to be not merely reconciled but transmuted into the mentor, if sickness is to be not merely the purification of the body but the purgation of the soul, if poverty is to disclose the sublime truth uttered by St. Francis that the rich man is waited on by

the servitor while unto the poor even God is the servitor, if our daily existence is to be made the mirror of His face and the harvest of His grace, then, Religion should be the moving factor of our common daily life, and not be confined to special occasions and select localities. What is Religion, after all? There was a little boy; and in his simple heart there arose the desire to note down every instance of kindness received. On every page in which he recorded the day's experiences, he would write: "*A* did this kindness; *B* showed this sympathy; *C* was thus serviceable". He would, however, place at the top of each page the simple words, 'Mamma' and 'Papa'; for he observed that they stood at the head of every day— they pervaded the whole course of life during the day, and they entered into every act and enjoyment of the day. What is Religion but the spirit which, on the living tablet of the heart with its ample record of joys and sorrows, engraves at the top 'God the Parent?' It is not an isolated fact, a specific occurrence, but a pervading sense, a permeating consciousness, an inwoven experience, through all the details of life. God

is not merely the Onlooker but the Participator. The mission of Religion is not to uphold the exalted throne of God but to reach down the heart of God into the murk and mire of my own sinful life and make the process of Divine sanctification prevail even in me. God will not only rectify and redeem but so transmute and transfigure that nothing survives except the grace of God. Religion has to instil God into the entire system of life and make Him manifest throughout creation. They are yet children in Religion that see God in the stars alone. As Rabindranath has said, God can create the stars, and yet He prizes not the glory of those orbs so much as the twinkling light of the earthen lamp lit by man in his home. My little lamp is the affectionate tribute of the soul to the Giver of all light. Man thus owns himself to be the worshipper of holy light; man thus proves himself the receptacle of heavenly light. Then, in our tiny lights of the home, our little joys and our simple enjoyments, we are to realise His presence. As Max Muller has observed, in their exaggerated admiration people seek super-

natural births for their incarnations; but what is there more miraculous than the ordinary birth? If only we have the Waiting and welcoming spirit of trust and devotion, we shall not fail to see that the conception and birth of every child is truly the emerging out of one more ray from the central effulgence of the God of all glory.

Here we are seated in what we believe to be a man-made edifice. But how is this different from any other place, if we do not, filled with the joy of faith, realise that, from the starting design to the final finish, it is a shrine builded by the spirit of God and that it could be a temple only when made holy by the Holy Spirit of God? Shall we, not on casual occasions alone, but on every occasion, at every foot-step, in every look and word, seek to fulfil the divine purpose of this edifice by filling it with the spirit of God as manifest in ourselves? The holy church is holy, because of the holy spirit which is its indweller and because of its unifying bond of truth and love and righteousness between the Adored and the adorers, the Wor-

shipped and the worshippers. Thus, not with borrowed sanctimoniousness but through realised grace, with purity and piety, shall we worship the Deity as the God of truth and love and righteousness. And therein lies, for this dear church, the strength of its foundation, the endurance of its structure, the attraction of its appearance, the fulfilment, above all, of its purpose.

Again, what is the home but the lived church, even as the church is the focussed and illumined home? There into the home we carry the church to be lived once again; for, these are but two halves of one full life lived in and unto the glory of God. Says the Upanishad: Every relation is dear, not for the sake of that relation, but for the sake of the *Atman*, Brahma. There is also the complimentary truth: God is dear in and through and for the sake of every relation; He becomes dear, for instance, even for the sake of my child—that incarnated spirit in the home and in society that is to prolong and perpetrate my own true self.

Verily, God is All-in-all. Divested of Him, there is no residue left. Into the food

we eat, the house we live in, the avocations that bring us strength and joy, we shall take our God who is the stay of life and the bliss of life. There is no occupation too secular, no place too worldly, no transaction too mercenary and no work too routine for God. This happy, holy, blessed experience Religion alone can give to us—even the indwelling of God, the immingling of God, the infusing of God into all our desires and deliberations, doings and dealings. Thus to assure us that He is present always and everywhere — and, hence, even now and here—that is the mission of Religion.

THE SPOUSE DIVINE.

(1911)

It has been said that all Theology is an attempt to name the Unnameable, as all Religion is an attempt to realise the Unrealisable, all morality an attempt to imitate the Inimitable. It does happen inevitably, therefore, in the pursuing of Religion and its expression that we do say and suggest things which will not bear close scrutiny, if minutely analysed, but report themselves as essentially true to the heart that thus distils out Truth from the midst of much that is weak and frail with the weakness and frailty of human language and thought.

Most of us have heard of that wonderful saint, Meera Bai—a Rajput princess, but, unlike princesses in general, touched by Divine Love and exalted above all thrones to that seat of glory where the soul feels that not for the monarch's throne, not for the rod of authority, not for the mine of wealth, would

it give up the invaluable honour of saying, 'I am God's'. Wholly absorbed in God, the Princess would often in her room be engaged in conversation when alone; and her husband, a powerful, manly, self-respecting chieftain, unable to understand the mystery, thought she was speaking to some third person. At last, he broke open the door, rushed in and asked, "where is he?" He found none there. "Where is he?" he asks. "Where is the other person that you were talking to? Where has he escaped?" And the princess answers, "He is there before thine eye;" but he could not see Him. He could not bear it. She had to go away. She left Rajasthan and went to Brindavan. The most renowned of the Saints at Brindavan was Rup Gosai; and to him she sent word, saying, "I should like to see Gosai any pay my respects to him." Rup Gosai was of a profoundly devotional spirit; but he had not outlived the general limitations of a Hindu Saint and, therefore, said, "Woman and coin cannot approach me." "Rup Gosai!" said the Princess, "what is he that he should say he is a male? He is a *woman*. In Brindavan *Sri Krishna* is the only

male. If Gosai thinks himself a male, then he has slowly and cunningly got into the Lord's place in the bridal-chamber, and must be driven out ”.

We, who call ourselves Theists and this wide world a paradise—have we not to learn from this the corresponding but magnified lesson that there is only one male—God—and we are all females, women? It must be difficult for one to get into that female relation to the Lord. Aye, in a country where, in spite of intimate, devout affection, there has been wanting intimate, devout intercommunion between man and woman, it is still more difficult to feel that the soul has no sex. Gradually, however, it is given to the soul to work itself into the sex of the woman and realise the Lord as the male, the Spouse Divine of the human soul, as madame Guyon would put it in her *Thought of Religion* as the marriage of the finite with the Infinite Soul.

Says Francis Newman—A man may begin his religion in awe and fear, subdue it into philosophy and poetry, and gain personal attachment to the Lord as Father; but he perfects his religion when he makes

his soul the woman-soul and God the Lord of the soul. And this is how Newman beautifully distinguishes woman's love for the husband from all other kinds of love. Under the latter, the command is, 'Thou *shalt* love the Lord.' Love is there a duty. Under the former, it is, 'Thou *mayest* love the Lord.' Love is here a delight, the priceless privilege of the heart, the complete rapture of the soul. Truly, if love is the master-passion of man, it is the very life-blood of woman. To her love is life—life and love are inseparable. You cannot maintain the creeper, if you cut off its living contact with the soil below through the trunk. In other kinds of love, at most, we cannot but be dependent; but in woman-like love, we love to be dependent, not out of helplessness, not through prudence. Independence is out of the question—it were an outrage. The woman who is a true wife is a widow the moment she has been separated from her lord. Her whole life is focussed and centred into one sentiment, love, therefore, to be dependent as a privilege, a joy, an invaluable pleasure to the soul—that is the test of woman's love.

To take some examples. A man once observed to his wife, "So and so was an excellent woman. The moment she heard her husband was dead, she went and threw herself in to a well." The wife replied, "I do not think, though, it is the highest kind of love." "Why?" "I cannot tell, but so I feel." This man went out a-hunting; and, while away, he got up a story that he had been carried away by a tiger, and he sent a messenger to carry the news to his wife. "Madam, thy husband has been carried away by a tiger." The woman heard these words and she dropped down dead. That is perfect love. It needed not the extraneous help of a well to destroy the life; on the other hand, love gone, life too was gone instantly with it. Indeed, this quality of love was what brought into being the institution of *sati* in the first instance, though, like all other institutions, as the external social obligation superseded the inner impulse, it became a mere ceremony and, therefore, an outrage.

Such true love continues to show itself in various ways:—

(A) (1). The wife shall not utter the name of the husband. Of course, this injunction has now become mechanical, but leave it alone and see what is at the back of the observance. It is this — that there is no name to utter. We give names when there are two or more similar things; and we do so to distinguish and identify them. Wherein lies the need for a name when there is but one thing of its kind? Hence it is that Carlyle has said, the first cloth the Soul is wrapped in is the name: the Soul comes into this world without a name. The husband has no name—he is the only one of his kind. In Seetha's *swayamvaram*, the several princes pass before her, and Seetha names them in order. But when the turn comes to Rama, she merely bows her head. There is no name to be uttered there. And they who come upon the image of God in countless forms at every turn seldom take the name of the Unnamable upon their lips, and that, even because He never is absent from their hearts.

(2) The counterpart, again, of the above-mentioned attitude is this. It is said of

Ananda Mohan Bose's mother that, when in the course of conversation any one uttered her husband's name, she would say, 'pause', and then for a while, with folded hands, would contemplate upon, and bow down before, that name. Likewise, we who note the name of God in and amid a myriad names, we must say to our mind, 'pause', to bow down in reverence before the next step is taken.

(B) (1) That sprightly young lady, Elizabeth Bennet, in Jane Austen's novel asks her lover, "Why do you love my name and not other ladies'?" And he answers, "It is for thy keen intellect, for thy sharp wit." "Well, well, that is to say, for my impertinence?" "No, no! rather, for your ultimate good sense." Then the lady, like the true wife that she is, says, "Yes, my reputation is in your hands. Upon you will depend whether it be impudence or good sense." So the ultimate first principle in Religion is trust in God's keeping: Thy reputation is in His hands. Let the whole world conspire against the wife; if the husband suspects her not, she is happy, she is contented. But if the husband

comes to have some suspicion, the whole world may swear that she is the very pink of purity and perfection, yet she has no place in the husband's heart. And so, if I am alright with my Lord, says the soul, it matters not even if I am all wrong with the world.

(2) And this position also has a counterpart. If it may be so put without presumption, even His reputation is in my hands, as mine is in His. Nobody can call the Lord bad without at once hearing a voice of protest from His love, the *Bhakta*: 'you know nothing about Him. I, who have been with Him in the closet, I, who have been with Him at the hearth and in the home, I know what He is.' It is said of Mahomet the Prophet that, as his wife believed in him, his reputation was alright with her and it mattered not what the world thought of him. When Carlyle wrote his *Sartor Resartus*, Jane Welsh exclaimed, "Truly, dear, it is a work of genius!" Thus the reputation of his genius was safe in his wife's hands, despite its disparagement by the critics. As the

book was taken round from publisher to publisher only to meet with scant courtesy, his heart all the while was sustained by the consciousness of the grateful fact that his co-pilgrim did feel assured of its worth. In like manner, the Lord's reputation is in my hands. The 'blind world,' looking through the tinted glasses of perverted vision, may raise its random mock of blasphemy; nevertheless, the silent heart, possessed of the clear light of illuminating intercourse, bears about sufficient counter-testimony to the unimpeachable goodness of its Lord. The simple security of its own 'I have felt' is enough and more than enough refutation against the subtle sophistry of all others' 'Believe no more.'

(C) (1) Again, it is said of the *Gopis* that they would dance and dance in a ring around Sri Krishna because they so rejoiced in their Lord. And rightly so, for theirs was a joy that could not be contained. If a stimulus to your emotion is put in, you cannot sit quiet, you must frisk about. Let some piece of good news be brought to you, and it must

express itself in external rapture. Should some stirring thought strike you, it must figure itself forth in the beaming eye, the quivering lip and the shaking hand. Hence, the *Gopis* too danced because they were enraptured. Their whole life was music and dance. We with our One Only Lord in the centre, we must attune ourselves to such harmony as that, in our personal relations with our God.

(2) This relationship has a counterpart also. Sri Krishna was like a central mirror and in him the *Gopis* beheld not alone their respective but also one another's reflections. This rendered each dear to the other; and for his sake they rejoiced in one another's company, thus forming a circle of co-worshippers. We, for our part, come here together, not only to find ourselves reflected in him, not merely to sing forth our individual *magnificat* before Him, but also to rejoice in one another, by His side. Public worship thus becomes, not a social appendage to religious life, but the social fulfilment of individual aspiration. I rejoice in Him; you rejoice in

Him; therefore we rejoice in each other and together in Him. Congregational worship is like bringing a Leyden-jar to be charged and re-charged with spiritual electricity from the central source and circulating it for common behoof. The first thought of the wife, as she has to face any difficulty, is, 'O that I could lean on the strong arm of my husband!' And similarly, when any cup of joy is close to her lips, her foremost wish is to pass it on to him as well, that she may share it with him. We are thus a ring around the Lord, and to the Lord we come with our crosses and our crowns, our tears and our triumphs.

(D) (1) Further, after a faithful genuine marriage there can follow no thought of divorce. The whole progress of civilization has been summed up as the uplifting of marriage out of the mire of physical enjoyment on to the mountain-top of spiritual monogamy — monogamy not merely of the body but also of the soul, not enforced by the world but embraced by the spirit. This impossibility of separation or second love is born of the vital principle that, where once

love has been, there love is bound to be for ever. Where God once loves, He loves for ever. The wedlock tie of union between the finite and the Infinite knows no severance — the best proof and evidence, this, of immortal life and love through eternity.

(2) And this condition, moreover, carries its own counterpart. The test of true religion is that the soul rejoices to be alone with the Alone, alone to the Alone, so that the only convincing argument against idolatry is the soul's spontaneous fidelity, which relishes spiritual worship, which enforces spiritual loyalty, which generates spiritual fellowship, and which sustains spiritual immortality. The Lord is my Joy, because He is the Lord of my soul. I love to be dependent upon Him. His beauty enraptures me. His sanctity enthralls me. His harmony evokes the latent harmony in my soul.

It is thus with each Brahmotsav. The in-coming of the Lord is but the home-going of the soul; the re-union of the soul with the supreme Soul is but the recélébration of their

marriage. And as with the birth of a new child the husband and the wife sit together and renew within themselves the pledge of mutual devotion and say, 'We rejoice once more over this new offspring of ours', so with the advent of this Brahmotsav, let us, each one sit together with the Lord and renew the pledge and promise of devotion to Him.

SADHANA : ITS MEANING AND METHOD.

(1922)

It is said that, in the early days of Mahommedan inroads into this country, a certain town was sacked by Mahommedan troops; and as was the practice then, a rush was made towards the temple, that it might be pulled down as a sort of tribute and honour to the Lord of hosts who had given the Islamic arms the victory of the day. There was a priestess attached to the temple. She ran in, embraced the idol, pressed it to her bosom, held it close to her heart, clung to it with the utmost confidence and trust; and she did not mind the other consequences. The troops came, ran into the holy place, and saw the woman holding fast tenaciously to the idol. They wanted to separate her from the object of her attachment

* At the 10th anniversary celebration of the Cocanada Brahma Sadhanasramam (25—12—22).

and then pull down what to them was an abomination. But the woman would not let go her hold. She must live or perish with it. In helplessness and disgust, the men thought the only way to accomplish the purpose of demolishing the idol was to put an end to the woman. Under the commander's order, a soldier drew out his sword and cut off the head of the woman. It is said that, as the blood gushed out every drop of it wore the form of the god, of the idol, she worshipped. Every drop of the blood in her body was thus shaped in to the image of the object of her worship. Her assassins felt astonished at this wonderful transformation in the very physical system of the woman. The wisest of the band rightly reflected: "Leave alone her errors; hers is the faith that transforms the devotee into the Deity." That is the end and goal of our *sadhan*—to make and shape the devotee into the image of the Deity, that naught may remain of his own self. As Maeterlinck has said, the great secret, the final mystery of the universe is that the *substance* of all is one and that substance is not matter but spirit. The substance of all is one; only its

manifestation is in myriad forms. But we very often mistake the forms for the substance, and thus we mislead ourselves and misjudge others; we mislead ourselves in making the passing phenomena permanent landmarks, and again, we misjudge others by magnifying the chance incident of the moment into an eternal characteristic of the soul. If we would know the true meaning of life, if our *sadhana* is to bear good fruit, if, in fact, the purpose of creation is to be realised, we should strive, ceaselessly, ardently and with the hunger and thirst of an irrepressible passion, strive for the realisation of the one supreme end of our life, namely, to transform the devotee into the Deity. Just for a moment let us realise this purpose of creation; and we shall, as a matter of sheer logical necessity, be driven to the conclusion that *such* is the duty and *such* the occupation that have been assigned unto us. The purpose of creation is even this—the self-realisation of the Supreme Spirit. As the oldest of our national scriptures has said, He in His undivided unity dwelt from beginningless time till in His immortal love He decided: “I am One; I

shall be many, that the many might be incorporated and integrated once again, re-assumed, into the One." Thus the outgoing God, the out-ranging God, the returning God the realised God;—that is the object of all *sadhana*. The end and aim of all *sadhana* is: How to leap out of the illusion of 'the many' and reach out into the spotless pure vision of 'the One', *Ekamevadvitheeyam*. As we perceive this supreme truth—the self coming out of the Self and ranging forth as the self, and coming back into the Self to be the Eternal Self—as we realise this process as the divine purpose of creation, a process which construes the complete cycle of cosmic life as a four-fold self-presentation of the Deity as the Progenitor, the Protector, the Perfector and the perpetuator (to adopt the terminology of the first verse of our congregational chant, *goshti prardhana*)—as we read the universe in this light, we understand why *sadhana* has been prescribed, not as a process of mere spiritual gymnastics, not as a system of self-help, but as the pilgrim's progress along the everlasting path unto the eternal goal. If only we thus

address ourselves in the proper spirit, according to the right method, to this ceaseless quest of the Eternal One, how in a single moment we feel we are transformed! This so-called fleshly body, with its encumbrance of bone and muscle and skin and what not, becomes the holy temple in which the Spirit is enshrined; and, as one keen-sighted thinker suggests, when we touch the human body with the right sentiment, we really touch the hem of His garment, the sacred garb of the Divine. Aye, the whole universe is, as Goethe has said, the live-garment woven at the loom of time to half-reveal and half-conceal, as through a translucent veil, the adorable Indweller. All earth is holy ground; every object is a 'theophany', a suggestive token of God; all occupations are sacred engagements; every moment reckons a 'heart-beat' responsive to His Love. This conception of life gives unto us, on the one hand, the amplest opportunity to render back devoutly unto Him, though in a soiled state all the talents He has deposited in us; and, on the other hand, it brings us into the closest contact with the Spirit, as it indwells and permeates this marvellous creation. Man

the imaged idea of God; God the indwelling Spirit of man—where is the cleavage; what becomes, after that, of all the divisions, of all the clashes and conflicts, with which we stultify ourselves and frustrate the purposes of life? One tender smile of affection from the devoted heart to the Eternal Beloved, and one sweet note of response from the Eternal Lover back to the expectant heart thus the Supreme Lord becomes alike the prompter and the fulfiller, the source and the gratification of all the joys of life. His outgoing is the manifest world: His home-returning is the ideal world. To realise this is the end of *sadhana*. And it has been enjoined on us even by our own God as a task, not imposed by extraneous compulsion, but induced within us for our own weal; so that we *practise* this *sadhana* for the healthy growth of souls and not avoid it as a curb on the freedom of life. The aim and purpose of it all is to behold the glory of God here and now, within and without us. If we thus feel, through God's grace, encircled, embraced with the glory of His presence, there is but one sentiment that the heart cherishes after that

blessed experience—the sentiment of thankful joy, of joyful thanksgiving. Dear God, is this what Thou hast designed and provided for me—to see Thee, to perceive Thee, to feel the touch of Thee everywhere and always? If this is Thy purpose, how prosaic is the description which says, “Thy purposes are good”! Nay, Thy intentions and purposes are *Godly* and partake of Thy divine nature. Thou dost, every minute of eternal time, work out the purposes of reporting Thyself, reaffirming Thyself, reproducing Thyself, reincarnating Thyself through the whole universe, through every mote and monad, through every atom and animal-cule. There is Thy joy, blessedness, bliss, ecstasy, *anandam*, as well as there is Thy truth, reality, *satyam*—the transformation of humanity into Divinity. That is the end of *sadhana*.

How shall we practise it, how put ourselves into the normal mood and posture for it? There are many ways in which this is expressed. But, after all, the many ways resolve themselves into one single way, namely, to say, “Think not of thyself, think

only of the Lord. No will of Thine, only the purposes of the Lord"; and again to say, "Thy will is mine". In Narada's *Bhakti Sutras*, those who adore God are divided into four classes. God is symbolised as the King; and it is said, the King has four class of persons around and about Him: first, those who enter into His councils—the wise; second, those who serve Him—the philanthropic; third, those who entertain Him—the good-natured; the fourth class have no name: "the others" they are called. These last have no recommendation; they possess no special characteristic; they function in no capacity; they render no service to the King; they are useful in no way to him; and they are called 'dependents.' They have to get their all from the pure bounty of the Lord. They are *bhaktas*. They receive everything from God; and they have nothing to give in return. That is the position of the mind, that is the attitude of the heart, that is the peculiar state of the soul to which *sadhana* leads us. We are 'the others' that have no name. What pretensions have we to that wisdom which enters into His coun-

cils? What possessions have we to subserve His providence? What traits of good nature have we to entertain Him? We are 'the others,' the 'dependents,' the *bhaktas*, owing our all to Him and saying and feeling always, "I am nought: Thou art everything." It is only thus the stubborn separate self is annihilated. That is the true *Nirvana* in which the egoistic self is so eliminated that the Supreme One is All-in-all and shines forth in His radiant and enrapturing beauty. "Annihilate yourself, that you may have salvation;" says a renowned Sufi, "when you go away, Truth (*haq*, *satyam*) will be seated in your place."

Does that take away from man's moral responsibility? No. But it only adds the spiritual confession that what I do is given me to do for His pleasure: *hithayalokasyathava-priyartham*. It abates not a single jot of moral responsibility; it only transmutes the formal, moral obligation into a quickening, enchanting spiritual exaltation. It is not that there is no distinction of good and bad; but in God's creation bad has

no real place, for good is all-in-all: not that the distinction between good and bad is denied; but the distinction is obviated by the elimination of bad. No doubt, there is the old, puzzling question of the *will*. "Our wills are ours to make them Thine," declares the great poet. Yet that is only the language of the well-ordered moral life, not of the well-beloved devout life—of reverential submission, not of entranced embrace—of Mary caressing the feet, not of Meerabai lost in the love-light, of the Lord. "What have I to do with owning a will and training it?" says the *bhakta*, "Who am I that I should 'donate' a will to the Lord? There is no will save 'His will.' 'I will'—that is the prerogative of Him alone who could avow, 'I am.' The rest is all the *leela*—the divine delight—of the Lord." It may be true that a man without a will is a 'machine.' But it may also be true that the devotion which recognises, provides a place for, no will but "His Will," flowers into a messiah.'

Thus the end of *sadhana* is God. The motive of *sadhana* is truth. The range of *sadhana*

is the whole universe. The method of *sadhana* is the practice of "His Will" and "His Presence." For this is the end and aim ordained unto us by God. May He, in His infinite mercy, accomplish His purpose in us all, His own children!

WORK AND WORSHIP.

(1908)

I suppose several of you are acquainted with the beautiful, brief but very pregnant statement of the Theistic Creed, *The Brahma Beejam* as it is called, enunciated by Maharshi Devendranath Tagore. It consists of four articles: the first, referring to the unity, the supremacy and the majesty of God as the Author of all; the second, referring to the extent to which man can, with his limited nature, realise the qualities of God as they manifest themselves in devotion; the third, declaring that, to be blessed here and hereafter, the one mighty means is the worship of the All-perfect Being; and the fourth, laying down that worship consists in loving the Supreme Being and exercising oneself in such acts as are approved of Him. It is of the last article that I wish now to speak.

*Thasmin preethih thasya priya karya sadhanancha
thadupasanameva.*

The love of the Supreme Being and the exercise and practice of such acts as are dear

unto Him — these constitute worship. To love that Supreme Being and to do such acts as are approved of Him are manifestly two different things. There is a very common notion but, all the same, a very imperfect notion that, if we do such acts as we believe will be approved of God, that is worship. But that is only a half-truth. I say it is only half-truth but not entirely right, as it is not entirely wrong either. If work is worship, then morality is religion, and action sentiment and what we do, not the expression of, but the same as, what we feel. But what we feel, cherish, hanker after, is different from the very act of doing. Take the case of a mother and a child not attached to each other—say, a step-mother and a child. The child may have all the attention required; the mother may have all the obedience expected. All may seem smooth; on the one hand the discharge of parental duty, and on the other the expression of filial trust. But the hearts are not united. On the one side attention and on the other side gratitude do not constitute love. We may do such acts as are not wholly objectionable, as, when tested either

by the man-made law of government or by God's law of morality, may be alright. But there is not a passion for, a constant feeling after, a permanent sense and an abiding consciousness of, God. The life may be correct, the motive may be above reproach; but what may be called God-consciousness is only weak and occasional. On the other hand, though we seem to love God, our life will not be correct and all we do will not be justified of God. There are many who go into raptures of praise when they hear or sing of the Deity, who seem to spend the whole time in something connected with worship. They are employed in various pursuits — chanting hymns, reading the scriptures and talking on religious topics. Yet if you watch the general trend of thought, if you observe the average act, the desires most prominent, the leanings most readily given scope to, you will find that, in spite of all this deep-moved religious spirit, there is not a practice, a disciplined religious temper, that seeks naturally to do such acts as are approved of God. Thus to love God ardently is one half of it; and to do acts that are approved of him is the other half of it.

Let us never be carried away by the notion that, if the set prayer is said, if the prescribed routine is gone through, if the 'scriptural' hour is duly spent and all the self-imposed acts duly attended to, all this is equal to loving God. How many instances have we not heard of of the unfortunate relationship where, in order to avoid public opinion, husband and wife agree to contribute to each other's company, to live together, the husband to supply money, the wife to render service, yet live practically divorced, each going apparently through the round of conjugal duties, yet each failing in self-forgetful devotion to the other? Either may be very eager that the other should not suffer poverty; either may be very jealous of the other's reputation; either may be supplying what the other wants; yet there may be no attachment, though each professes to love the other. If the husband's heart is occupied with the wife, he will have an instinctive disinclination to turn away from her. If the wife is truly devoted, it is impossible for her to feel that so and so is more winsome than her husband. What is it that Savitri said? "A woman's heart is

given away only once, not twice." Where the heart is, there also the body must be. The father may frown, Narada may predict, Yama may frighten, Hell may gape, Darkness may threaten; but the heart is devoted. Leave the corpse she cannot; but the soul is going, and where the heart is, there also the body will be. Similarly, our *whole-hearted* attachment to God is not for what God has given, not for what He is going to give, not for the splendid world not even for the close watch and attention given to you. It is for Himself. In physical science, we say two atoms cannot occupy the same space. In spiritual science, we say, 'Where God is there can be no other thing (Satan!)'; And the peculiarity is that it is impossible to supersede this God-possession, but everything else can be included or absorbed in it. He is the magnifying-glass through which you see the whole world of panoramic beauty. Devotion to God becomes the crystal through which you see all. Moral life follows it as the inevitable consequence, the necessary result, of that devotion to God. An English Divine has said, "The miser has hidden his wealth

somewhere. Nobody except himself is aware of it. There is no fear of its being lost or shared. Why should he not think it is safe and take no thought of it? Yet send the man anywhere you please; yet the mind is where the money is." The true devotee's love of God is like that. It is not for fear of anything but because the mind travels to God, the heart turns to God, the whole sentiment diverts itself to God, as a matter of necessity, as a law of nature. To revert to the old figure, other people also earn money but they look upon it as a means to some end. But in the case of the miser, money is an end in itself. Give him anything. He values it in terms of money. 'What will it fetch?' is the one question. Similarly, with the devotee, with the man of prayer, God is the end of all. Everything in life is valued and assessed with God as the standard. The whole thought is immersed in Him. The greater this absorption and this immersion, the freer it is for all other engagements. It is like a man refreshed mysteriously from a substantial source of refreshment. Some people seem to be ever

active. Wherefrom does this energy come? It is because whatever is put into them is assimilated and becomes part and parcel of the body. It weaves itself into the very tissues and cells of the body. Unto the God-absorbed man, whatever he lays deep to his heart becomes a Divine comfort; whatever he is engaged in seems a Divine suggestion. The ultimate result of love is that, as love pre-supposes company, so it realises itself in affinity: and thus man becomes more and more divine and more and more evolved. This shows itself in the divine behaviour of man to all.

Devotion should have no ulterior motive. It should be disinterested. self-constrained. All that follows thereafter as its expression in Duty comes to be done spontaneously, without any external compulsion, any outer prompting, any self-regarding calculation. God is all that He is, because it is His nature. So, too, as Divine nature grows in man, he becomes what he becomes, leaning towards righteousness, yielding to the humble and inspiring, and setting an example to

others—all out of spontaneous nature. When Divine nature is thus formed in Him, the doing of such acts as are approved of Him comes of itself. All this comes, as it were, in a chain of evolution. As all acts are prompted by Divine nature, they are justified of Him, not because He is watching and calculating them, but because, by the Divine coming into and appropriating him, man becomes the receptacle of Divine Energy. This is called *Avatharam* (Incarnation).

The major portion of our acts are cast out of God's acts. If a boy errs, the sympathetic father thinks for himself that there might be something good in that seeming error; only the expression might be bad. He goes about to get at the sound cure for it, to see that the misguided youth does not become a colt among colts but a wielder of human power amidst brute force. Such is also the guidance of God. Such is the rule of Divine inspiration and human progress. Thus the nucleus environs itself in Divine circumstances. The behaviour becomes the appropriate expression of the inner nature.

The object and value of worship is, not to shape God to our bent, but to shape ourselves to His design. Worship is successful in so far as we receive more and more of God and glorify Him by doing such acts as are approved of him. And thus His kingdom is established when the Deity is reflected in human hearts and manifested in all the acts of human souls. The peculiarity of worship is that no time is too secular to be prescribed for it. It dreams in your dreams. It goes with you wherever you go. It is the test, the index, the measure, whereby to sound the extent to which there is Divine nature in you. As Keshub Chunder Sen has said, the only heaven that satisfies philosophy and delights the soul is worship and the inner company of God. Like the circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere, this Heaven is mysteriously located everywhere and yet it transcends all. Its area coincides with the area of God. We continually and perpetually grow into that Heaven. When there is that consciousness of God, it is under His guidance that everything is done. What

is this life ? It is like the branch of a tree on which are seated two birds ; the one eats, the other sees and enjoys. Through the self-realisation of the eating bird, the seeing bird also rejoices. Thus is worship realised.

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THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF HUMAN BROTHERHOOD.

(1915)

Here is a verse from the Yajur-Veda Aranyaka: "The *Brahman* is the inner Soul of all existence." To begin with, it is noteworthy that this verse is as age-long as the most ancient of scriptures. Is this not a convincing proof that religion is not restricted to one age or to one country—not the privilege of one chosen people or the monopoly of one favoured realm? It is eternal as the Truth of God, universal as the Love of God. In the dim hoary past when the civilisation of the world was yet in its infancy, the blessed *rishi*, illumined by the Spirit, was enabled to perceive His glory and to sing it rapturously, not as the feeble echo of a reported truth, but as the oracular voice of a realised experience. My brethren, the *Brahman* is the very inner soul seated in the hearts of all objects even as every

crystal consists of particles symmetrically clustered around a central axis with its forces of attraction and cohesion; even as in every organism the centre is the nucleus containing not merely the force around which additions might gather but also the living, cohering power which draws and holds together all the congenial accretions in the upgrowth of the microscopic speck of vital life. The Lord now sends forth, with the impulse of His own Spirit, myriads of created objects; and again He resumes them into Himself—not to annihilate but to cherish, not to wipe out but to conserve, not to engulf but to regenerate. Thus we are daily at the close of a great cycle with the in-coming of night, and again we are at the beginning of a new cycle with the returning dawn of light. As in the study of science and even in the pursuit of philosophy, with their more or less limited quest for immediate causes; as in the visions of poetry, with its intuitive attraction for some select, favourite features of a more or less soul-suffusing emotion; as in the endeavours of art to shift the concrete charm on to the canvas, so too, in the daily routine

of the work-a-day world, we place ourselves at every point within hedge and fence, partition and division. We lose ourselves in the labyrinth of abstract laws, content with immediate antecedents—connected links of phenomenal sequence. We forget, in the midst of man-made theories, that the central vitality is God Himself. As the child is but the child reproduced, as the friend is but the 'alter ego'—'the other self,' as the disciple is but the preceptor rejuvenated, as the harvest is but the seed manifolded, even so the universe is the offspring—the creation and the companion, the expansion and the harmony of the supreme Spirit-God. He is not merely a distant driving-power but the ever-present, immediate, inmost vitality. God is the plan and the purpose, the essential and enduring reality, behind this ever-unfolding scene called creation. Let us realise it as a literal fact that even now my tongue could not speak, the other organs of speech could not form the modulations to which we give the name of language, the atmospheric throbs of undulation could not carry my humble utterance to your receptive minds, my feeble expressions

could not find a sympathetic response in your valuable experience, but for the direct working, nay, the personal presence, of the Universal Witness in our souls through the whole round of these seemingly trivial transactions. When the sages described Him as the *sarvantharyamin*, they did not closet or confine Him at the centre of innumerable ramparts and fortifications, there to be segregated and thus shut out from our daily doings. In all our diversified activities, He precedes us, accompanies us, follows us, hovers over us, encompasses, underlies, permeates us. In the beat of the heart, in the wink of the eye, in the movement of the tongue, in the sensitiveness of touch, in the swing of the limb, in the delights of fragrance, in the charms of beauty, in the resolves of the will, in the aspirations of the soul — everywhere the Lord is the inspiration; the Lord is the effectuation; the Lord is the in-coming impulse; the Lord is the out-going endeavour; the Lord is the concluding ratification; the Lord is the cheering benediction. We misbelieve, we delude ourselves, when we talk of the laws of science and their compelling rule. The patient probings

of the searching student, the thrilling raptures of the sensitive artist, the selfless services of the generous philanthropist, the piercing insight of the mystic seer—all originate in, all emerge from, all converge towards, all terminate in, the supreme God. As the centre of a circle is not the point which shows the distance of one part from another but really that focus from which proceed the countless lines comprised within and constituting the complete circuit, so the Lord is the centre as well as the circumference of the full circle of life. The Lord in His sanctified Self is present in the inner soul, aye, seated in the very heart of every created being. As the good sovereign on the throne, apparently isolated and seemingly detached and unconcerned, is yet the source, the fountain-head, the central sanctum of authority and the sole stay and the supreme strength of the realm, even so the supreme Lord is seated in the inner core of all created beings; and from Him wells up and flows forth all vitalising spirit. He is not the mere ruler that issues orders and lets things have their own play; He is not the mere teacher who

imparts hints to the pupil and leaves him to work out the solution; He is not merely the skilled artist who sketches the design and expects his humbler workmen to rear the edifice; He is not even the parent who appor-tions his or her life to the offspring and gradually consigns it to its own care. He is the ever-pressut, direct, immediate personal, controlling Power. Yes! Therein lies the intimacy, the immediacy of God's presence, control and authority. From that place to this He has, in very fact, moved me to come to you. It has pleased Him to prompt you all to meet me, as a humble, trembling, erring exponent of this great truth today. He has desired that grain unto grain be attached in the plank on which we are seated. He has ordered that particle with particle be connected to make the floor on which we stand. He has arranged that layer upon layer be put into the spherical compact of this earth. Lastly, He has ordained that the whole fraternity of spirits do become one in Him.

Therein consists the religious gospel of brotherhood. All creatures become one in

Him, as all children become one in the mother. If brother holds to brother, if sister clings to sister, if brother and sister embrace each the other, it is all because of, it is as they all become one in, the mother. The love which the mother remits, seemingly separate and distributive, is really conjoint and unitive. All the children gather themselves into one sweet concourse within the womb whence they have successively been shaped into being, on the bosom from which they have successively drawn the very elixir of life, around the arms within which they have successively been enfolded, upon the lap whereon they have successively sported, and in the home wherein they have successively been cradled into joy and nurtured into vigour. She nurses the helpless babe into the attempting child, strengthens the timid child into the confident youth, and matures the confident youth into the dutiful house-holder. This blessing of the Spirit-Mother makes all brothers and sisters one in Her. The controlling authority of the teacher, the comprehensive instruction of the teacher, the unifying affection of the teacher, in a word, the central personality of the

teacher, makes one body of the class-members around the teacher in their growth into life-long companionship, aye, in several cases, into eternal co-pilgrimage. As the children in the home become one in the mother, as the disciples in the class become one in the teacher, as the subjects in the state become one in the sovereign, we become one in the Lord — not merely that we become one *for* the Lord, not that we become one *through* the Lord, not that we become one *with* the Lord, but that we become one *in* the Lord. We are thus pervaded and environed by the Divine Spirit and fused into one compact, inseparable, indissoluble brotherhood — not co-operation of resources, not division of labour, not contract between mutual help-mates, but unification — complete oneness — in the Spirit, albeit occasionally suppressed by tyranny, enfeebled by indifference, blindfolded by ignorance or atrophied by insensibility. We are primarily one, because He has created us one. We are essentially one, because we are moulded of the same substance. We are eternally one, because ‘all are the undying offspring of one Sire,’ not merely ‘but parts of one stupendous

whole.' Herein lies the real truth, the central truth, of our spiritual life. Our brotherhood is not the brotherhood of the many grouped together as one, as is the ordinary notion of brotherhood. It is not the brotherhood of diverse elements knit together, but the brotherhood of the multifarious emerging out of the One; not the brotherhood of several notes mingling into one strain, but the brotherhood of many offshoots from one parent-stock; not the brotherhood of several workmen labouring in one field or factory, but the brotherhood of the many disciples germinating from the spiritual seedplot of a single Preceptor.

THE MORAL LAW OF THE SPIRIT*

(1923)

As the invitation was kindly given to me to come and help in this thrice-blessed function of the Young Men's Prayer Union entering on a fresh year of its useful and commendable activities, I felt that I should be tendering my humble homage unto the Holy Spirit if I responded to that invitation. In that spirit I have come here; and moved by that spirit, I shall address a few hearty words to you, be they but very homely words.

In the physical sciences they recognise one great and truly marvellous principle. That is called the principle of the Conservation of Energy. Energy can never be wasted, can never be diminished, can never be destroyed. It may assume diverse forms, it may be transmuted from one expression to

* At the annual re-opening of The Young Men's prayer Union, Cocarada (22 8-24).

another—at one time as a moving force, at another time as a glowing light and a third time as some other phenomenon. But eliminated it cannot be. To try to put an end to energy is to combat the very purpose of creation. It needs but brief reflection to perceive that there is a corresponding and, in a real sense, a sublimer principle, namely, the Conservation of life. Life is, by Heaven's warrant, indestructible. Life can never—on no account—be diminished or destroyed. And as we proceed step by step along the scale, as life manifests itself in diverse organisms through its several expressions of assimilation and integration, separation and multiplication, reproduction and perpetuation, and thus ascend higher and higher, we come to human life, where, as thinkers of different schools have observed, there emerges a principle of great moment, namely, the moral sense. We perceive that the old law of 'conservation' prevails with the most certain and unfailing application to this moral life of man. This moral life of man can never fail—cannot be diminished, cannot be even restricted. It may appear to be retarded, hindered, diverted,

forced back. But if there is one great truth, one solemn lesson, which history emphatically teaches on all hands, it is the lesson that the moral life of man must thrive, that the moral law must eventually prevail. A couplet that I read some time ago says, in confirmation of this moral law being the supreme reality,

“Stronger than the dark is light;
Stronger than the wrong is right.”

This moral law is not something that is external to, something that is located outside, the universe to be, from time to time, promulgated and enjoined. The moral principle evidences the potent moral force, the profound moral purpose, which has been infused into the very constitution of the universe. This world with its order is unthinkable to the physical scientist except on the basis of law. Likewise, this world with its moral values and moral judgments is unthinkable to the student of moral science except on the basis of a moral purpose being embodied into the very fabric of the universe. The uniform trend, the invariable tendency, the

irresistible impetus, of the whole universe is towards the moral perfection. Beat down the moral law with oppression, with prejudice, with bigotry, with selfishness; yet it will lift its head, it will assert itself. As Carlyle has observed somewhere, this world is under the Government of One who is the eternal antagonist of injustice; and even though you employ all the talents, all the powers, of statesmanship, aye, all the military prowess of the world, against this moral purpose, woe unto the opposition thus set up: all the greater will be its defeat and destruction! This world, as he elsewhere says, is not a dungeon, a charnel-house; it is God's, it belongs by eternal right to the supreme Ordainer and Exemplar of all morality.

That is the first lesson we have to learn, if life is to be -- I shall not say, a success -- if life is to be a fact. Take away from life this supreme conviction that the moral law is God's own commandment; life is empty, life is void, life is not only barren but almost all a myth. It makes all the difference in your career, it constitutes all the distinction

between reality and fiction, if you do not learn this lesson on the threshold of life when you are young and continue to practise this lesson all the days of your life. To the same effect runs an Upanishadic text, that there are two paths: there is the path that is good and there is the path that is pleasant; and the life of him that chooses the path that is good is by God Himself blessed with increasing moral strength and spiritual vigour, while the life of him that chooses the path that is pleasant finds only loss, and 'great is the injury thereof': *maha. theevinastih!* It is this supreme truth that you will have to learn at the very beginning of your active career, namely, that the moral law is beyond all doubt the sovereign will of God.

"Stronger than the dark is light;
Stronger than the wrong is right."

By no known process could the dark be enabled to overwhelm the light; by no known power could the wrong be equipped to vanquish the right. On the other hand, along all directions, through all avenues, from all points of the compass, strength

flows in, sympathy streams in, benediction, like a current, surges into the spirit of the man who honours this moral law. That is life—life abounding, life abiding. He is strong because he is on the side of right. He is strong because he is in pursuit of light. Let him once turn his back on the law; and all the rich wisdom of the world is unto him a buried treasure. Let him but once own allegiance to the wrong; and the whole Government of the world pronounces him a rebel and an exile. It is this moral law that commands unswerving allegiance; and when that allegiance is given, it, in its turn, makes him who is loyal to it strong as with 'the strength of ten.' Obey the moral law, and the world obeys you. Defy the moral law, and the world's hand is turned against you. You must realise that the moral law is incorporated into the very constitution of the universe. You can no more pluck this moral law out of the foundations of the universe than you can pluck the sun out from the fair face of the firmament. How blessed is our God manifested, and how happy is our life rendered, that this moral

law is thus an integral part, nay, it is the very substance, of our life! It is woven into our very being. Blessed be the name of the God that has so ordained it!

What is it that we want as the real prize of life? The prize of life is further life. Once granted life—real life, we are loath to die. The sole prize of life is more life; and more life is rendered possible only by the steady, uniform operation of the moral law. Our life is rendered thinkable, because we are all governed by the moral law. Let the moral law abate; life also ebbs out. It is the richness of the moral principle that also enriches human life. Our heads bow before those that are the exponents, the living incarnations, of the moral law. With that worship, we grow, we become worshipful. As Maharshi Devendranath Tagore has taught us, God is worshipful; and as we worship Him, we become gods, we become worshipful. And God's worshipfulness consists in this, that He is the supreme manifestation, fulfilment and guarantee of the moral ideal. As it were, by a hundred processes of uplift, God, as the living Fulfilment of the moral ideal, lifts

us upwards towards Him. We become godly, because we adapt ourselves to the moral purposes of God; and what is for the lower animals a necessity, what is for ordinary human beings a task, becomes for us truly and verily a growth and an expansion and, with it, a joy. We grow with the moral endeavour. Food nourishes the body; knowledge feeds the mind; love quickens and enlarges the heart, and righteousness, which is only our realisation of that pure morality as God reveals and ordains it, is the food and nourishment, growth and perfection, of the human spirit.

It is this lesson that we have to learn all through our lives. And the earlier we realise it and the closer we follow it, the better and happier for us. I am here this evening only to remind you, my young friends, for you know it already, that all the education which you propose to receive, all the usefulness which you hope to achieve, all the success which you rightly aspire to accomplish, all depends exclusively and entirely upon your adherence to this moral conviction, namely, that as it is by light

that man's feet shall be led, so it is by right that man's will shall be ruled. Light on the path, right in the heart—these mean God before and God within. God quickening and God sustaining, God guiding and God companionship—God being and becoming in and through each one of us. It has been said that the foundation of all religion, the purpose of all religious discipline, is to reproduce God in man. With the being of God once again becoming God through man, man is becoming God, through a divine perfection of himself; and that is the whole purpose of religion. And as you cultivate the spirit of devotion to God's moral law, you will find that the sum-total of your requirements in life is thereby anticipated and assured to you. In the dark day of doubt, believe in the moral law, and doubt resolves itself, if not into certainty, at least into expectancy and hope. In the trying day of temptation, believe in the moral law and temptation is transformed from a snare into a suggestion, and what has come to mislead you becomes only a warning unto you that you shall stand by the right and follow the light. Are you

opposed by an antagonist? The moral law demands a double duty of you. Question yourself whether your antagonist is in the right or you are in the right. If he is in the right, the moral law demands that you surrender yourself. If he is in the wrong, the moral law demands that you surrender not yourself; and even because you will not surrender yourself, your antagonist is bound to surrender himself, because it is the might of the moral law that overwhelms him. With morality on your side, you are ever secure. With morality justified of you, you are with God; and he who is with God can never be lost. Once Abraham Lincoln was advised by some of his friends who professed to be very pious that he should pray and implore that God might be on his side in the great Civil War between the Northern and Southern States in America. And like a true son of the Moral Being, Abraham Lincoln said, 'My purpose is not to pray that God might be on my side. My whole endeavour, my entire concern, is that I might be on the side of God—not that God might be won over to my side but that I

might be sure and steady on His side.' Conformity to the moral law means being on the side of God; and he who is on the side of God can, in this vast universe, have no *outside*—no foreign realm. Learn this lesson at the start of your life; and you will find that the hardest task becomes the most fruitful occupation, the most trying situation becomes the plea for genuine self-reliance; and you will feel that, like a protecting canopy over your head, like a shield and armour round your body, like a soothing balm under your feet, like an inspiring breath in your bosom, like an illuminating ray in your eye, this moral law will be your guide and your protection, your strength and your happiness. Nothing can go wrong with you, while you are on the side of the right; and he who is on the side of the right is always on the side of the Eternal Might, because, in the supreme government of God, that alone is might which is right, and unto the right alone is granted the prerogative of the maximum might.

My young friends, on this day, as you enter upon a new year of trustful endeavour

and hopeful outlook, ally yourselves with your God, the God of the moral law; and you will be not only safe and secure but strong and happy. This is a day, by happy coincidence, memorable in the history of India. This is the day, according to the Bengali calendar, on which, ninety-six years ago, Rajah Rammohan Roy, with his friends, as his biographer says, resuscitated spiritual worship in this land. And if there is any efficacy in spiritual worship, its sole purpose is to unite God and man and to unite man and man—to unite all mankind into one humanity and unite the whole family of men with its Author and Parent—God. This spiritual worship is, in a true sense, the morality of the Spirit. Spiritual worship is the moral law of the Spirit. Think not that this spiritual worship is something which you are, for your convenience or for your benefit, taking upon yourself. It is something that has been put into, embedded in, your very being by God himself. Michael Angelo says, when God gives the spirit in which to pray, then alone we pray. It is said of a certain Islamic devotee that, after

twenty years of prayer, he gave up praying, because he said that, though he had prayed for those many years, God had not turned towards him; when there came an answer to him from the voice within, softly whispering, that unless he had had the inspiration from God to pray, he would not have prayed at all. We are prompted to pray because God has turned towards us and is beckoning us towards Himself. God has called us to His worship; and God's worship consists only in the desire to become like God, to be of God, to be transmuted into God. Worship has no other purpose, no other justification. This is the only object of worship, that we become God-like. God Himself has put this spiritual craving into us. Do not fight shy of it. Do not think of worship as an institution of man's making. Do not think of worship as a set task. Do not think of worship as a profitable exercise. It is the spontaneous response of man to God, because God wants it of him; because God wants man to become truly and really His own child. He it is that has given us this spirit of worship; and as you cultivate this spirit, truly with God

before and within you, the moral law will find itself illustrated and incarnated in you; and as you grow under the moral law, you grow into God; and to grow into God is to attain immortality, to grow from age to age even to the end of time. God's blessing be with all of you!

And I shall conlude with an anecdote. It is said that Maharshi Devendranath Tagore was, on a certain occasion, journeying in a boat over a big river, the Padma, in high floods. Boats were afraid to ply, but his boat was some-how driven into the midstream. All cried out that there was danger; and yet the boat went forward, till, from the opposite direction, there was coming another boat from which a man cried to him, 'Go forward. No fear'. And you, young men, as you set sail over this wide expanse of life, you also need this reassuring greeting, 'Go forward. No fear'. And the greeting that those who have gone before you can give is this: 'Be true to the moral law, and seek to live the moral law'. Therefor give allegiance to God, and establish that allegiance through worship;

and then it is guaranteed unto you, 'Go forward. No fear. Your voyage will be successful. Your heaven will be reached'. God's blessing be with you all!

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DISCOURSES

RELIGION AND WORSHIP*

(1927)

What is Religion; and how is Worship the outstanding expression of Religion? If I might venture to place before you what I hold as the root-faith, the basic conviction, of my life, I shall declare that life realises and fulfils itself, life works out its purpose and attains its destiny, only in so far as the life is inspired and ordered by Worship. The poet says, 'Worth makes the man and want of it the fellow.' It may be laid down as a deeper and nobler truth that Worship makes the man and want of it the animal. It constitutes all the difference in the world whether a man leads his life according to his own terms of self-exertion and social propriety or with reference, and in deference, to a higher Power and a profounder Wisdom. That fact distinguishes, in other words, the routine from the responsible life. In that marvellous

* Extract from a speech, during Brahmotsav, at the newly consecrated Brahmopasana Mandir, Cocanada. (26-1-27).

advance of mankind from 'herd' to 'society'—from self-protecting fear to self-reliant duty, Worship has been the motive and the strength. Hence the rule, borne out by wide and deep experience, that a life desirous of being wisely regulated, that is, systematically and purposefully developed, should, at its very core, be quickened and amplified by a constant practice of Worship. It will argue very faulty judgment to imagine that he who thus goes through set worship need not mind other issues of life. On the contrary, Worship, which is God-consciousness intensified into God-communion, will always enjoin 'service' as sacramental homage to God. Therefore, the essence of the matter is: if life would be propelled by the motive-power of a wholesome and beneficent purpose, if life would advance towards a definite and worthy goal, if life like a vital organism would grow — that is, expand from within and not merely 'accrete' from without — then, life should be perennially nurtured — enriched and ennobled — by the devout practice of Worship. What is Worship? This implies, what is Religion? Religion is, not a theorised conclusion, but

a realised consciousness, which grasps, in one's individual experience, that basic truth which makes all systems of refined faith akin in essence—namely: the Universe, with its countless contents and its eon-old history, is an emanation of *Anandam*. According to Dr. Tagore, the correct English word for *Anandam* is Love. Creation, then, originates in Love; creation grows and expands in Love; creation fulfils and perfects itself in Love. We apprehend the true object of life only when we realise creation as the self-expression of Love, the *anandam*—the divine delight—of the Supreme Being. Then alone we can appreciate the truth, and subserve the purpose, of our life. To deliver this message and to enjoin this self-dedication is the office of Religion. Formularies repeated by rote cannot meet this demand for the individual apprehension of the truth that the soul's birth, continuation, evolution, destination, perfection, all are in and through Love. And Love necessarily implies, invariably relates to, a Loving Being. Impersonal love is a myth. Love that is not felt by, is not the emotion of, a living being, is all moonshine. Any talk of

love abstracted from conscious life—pure, noble life—is a jugglery in words. Cherishing true love, we must be devoted to a loving being. In fact, the true is, not merely that God *has* love, but really God *is* Love. Again, Love, genuine Love, is inherently good; and as certain as that fact, Love is also profoundly wise. It is no love that is not inseparably, organically, incorporated with wisdom. Else, it were not love of the soul but mere impulse of the sense. We have heard of the tame bear which, eager to scare away the annoying flies from the face of its sleeping master, hurled a big stone and thus crushed the head! Similarly, we may recall the story of the two women who claimed each to be the mother of a child—how the pretentious one was quite willing to have the babe cut into two parts and divided between the claimants; while the true mother would as readily forego her claim and save the child's life. 'Carry the point,' urges false love; 'save the main issue,' pleads true love. Thus, true love is always wise in the interests of the object of love. The God of Love is the God of Wisdom. Likewise, the God of Love and

Wisdom is also the God of Righteousness. Love generates, Wisdom fosters, and Righteousness perfects, the human soul. To the loving God even this sin-stricken soul is dear; to the wise God is manifest the germ of sanctity hid at its core; to the righteous God is owing that the germ grows into the fruit of godliness. The God of Righteousness elicits the *Prahlada* (the supreme joy) out of the *Daitya* (the child of gloom). And Religion consists in the realisation, the verified experience, the vivid consciousness, the unbroken continuity, of the joyous sense that this *visram*, this sum of all, is desired by Love, designed by Wisdom and accomplished by Righteousness. A life of Worship implies all this. Look at the sunny spectacle of the mother with the babe she loves. She lifts it, washes it, cleanses it, dresses it, anoints it with fragrant scents, kisses it with rapturous smiles, and so on. The child feels and enjoys all this love and gently throws its tiny, tender arms around the 'mother. That is symbolic of Worship. All the mother does is as much as to say, 'You are my precious darling'; and all the

darling does is as much as to say, 'You are my sweet mother.' Here is the out-going and back-coming of Love. Worship is this completing of the circle of Love started by God in creation. Says the Islamic Scripture: God spake to Mahammad and said, 'We have made thee for Ourselves.' God's love goes out for man to return to God through Worship. Thus, there is no separate, independent function super-imposed, but only the reaction of the spirit with the vow, 'Love shall command my love in return.' And that vow is made in Worship. Thus, as the circuit is completed, Love going out in Creation and Love returning in Worship, there is the constancy of holy companionship. With our mundane limitations, the darling child and the human mother keep together but for a brief period and merely at set points. But the intimate relationship between the child-spirit and the Divine Mother is satisfied only when this companionship continues and grows infinitely. Hence, not in occasional happenings and in special providences alone, but all through and always, we have to realise God's presence. The spirit of Worship, glowing with devotion,

sees God in everything as the All-enveloping One. There can exist absolutely nothing with which, with the innermost core of which, God is not inseparably associated' Our activity by day, our rest by night, both are in God. And all devotional exercises are methods, not for 'sitting down by God. (*upasana*) once in a way, but for constantly exercising the vivid sense, ceaselessly practising the living presence, of God. How terrific is that situation in *Gajendramoksham* when, overwhelmed by antagonism, the believer breaks down with 'శేషం శేషం జనెను వాడు శేషంబో లేడో !' ('He who is avowed to exist, exists He or not!') But there, too, Devotion is not completely foiled. Prostrate faith is combating oppressive doubt even with the weapons of piercing, wounding, agonising experiences, until rejuvenated faith starts up from the unexplored recesses of the soul.

It will do us good to dwell for a short while upon this and another very instructive episode in that *Mahapuranam*, a veritable *Divina Comedia*, in which our Heaven-illuminated POTANAMATYA unfolds the myste-

ries and the miracles of *Bhakti*—the mysteries of the ways and the miracles of the grace of God in the beatification of man.—Gajendra typifies the soul (in Sa'adi's fine phrase) 'snared the noose of the senses'—revelling in pleasures, slipping into the quagmire, struggling for extrication, and invoking intercession. The proud monarch of the vernal woods heedlessly strays into an alien element and is held in bonds by the lord of the transgressed domain. A life-and-death conflict, prolonged over weary years, ensues. His unaided powers completely worsted, and his mind quite distracted by biting regret for indiscrete trespass, the captive wistfully casts about for succour. Whither shall he turn, to whom shall he resort, for relief? With penetrating psychological insight, the poet-seer sets forth the entire process of this spiritual struggle—the painful awakening, the hard self-straining, the frustration, the prostration, the supplication, the rejuvenation, the redemption. As yet, it is mere regret, not repentance—only the sense of injury to self, not of wrong to the Lord. The mind, however, turns shortly

towards God—again, not to confess guilt but to elicit aid. In sublimest metaphysic set to the melody of sweetest verse, he betakes himself to the praise of the Deity whom he would adore and serve. But in the harrowing hour of spiritual tribulation, poetry or philosophy is but a make-shift substitute for Religion, the soul's intimate 'converse' with the Over-soul. "Fancy," observes a Sufi, "the madness of the man who, within full view of the blood-thirsty lion, still loiters *outside* the castle, shouting pious ejaculations—'You are my safety, my shelter, my protection, my strong-hold; I take refuge in you, in you I take refuge!' 'Fool, flee for thy life, rush indoors, if thou wouldst be safe and secure.' The voice is wringing with classic phrase; but the heart is writhing with an aching void. In the midst of the full-throated pean, Gajendra collapses with an anguished moan. "He that is reported to be everywhere and accessible to all petitioners—exists He or exists He not?" Let us take note that this is not the mood of saucy denial or of crazy doubt; it is the dazed infant's cry amidst the gloom which

has veiled the Mother's face. "Where, oh where is He of whom they postulate that He is available unto all, high or humble, that He protects the meek and the lowly that He turns His eye of compassion on all, that approach Him in straits, that He listens to the laments of all that carry their afflictions to Him? Will He not hear, see, mind, draw nigh to, this forlorn one?" From cheery praise to heart-splitting groan, it really means for the sin-smitten soul, one deeper dip into purgation and thus one closer step to redemption. The situation is unutterably excruciating: annihilation itself would be mercy! Gajendra is stupefied like one engulfed in a dreary chasm—above starless, around breathless, underneath bottomless. But it is evidence of Divine mercy that in the spiritual, as in the physical world, the darkest moment of night ushers the first glimpse of dawn into sight. Whisperings from witnesses around and intimations from the 'storied past' behind—God in Nature and God in History—serve to shed a gleam through the gloom—an ethereal ray from 'the heavenly Flame'—which points to the secret door opening in-

ward, out of the dungeon into the shrine. The 'reported' God and the 'recorded' God prelude the 'realised' God: Gajendra is thus vouchsafed *Iswarasannidhanam*—the touch, the thrill, of God in the soul. 'The sleeping springs are awakened,' as an Urdu poet puts it; the frozen fount thaws with the returning warmth. Inference yields place to intuition; the Cosmic 'All' becomes the Psychic 'Mine'; the style of address changes from He and Him to Thou and Thee: the soul's approach is not through studied praise from a distance but through spontaneous supplication at the Foot-stool. "With energy exhausted, with heart sinking, with senses swooning and body drooping; knowing and owning no haven, no refuge, save Thee, I bring my soul's agony to Thee; and it befits Thee, it is Thy prerogative, to pardon the prostrate penitent; Thou the Supreme One, Thou the Fountain-head of Bounty and Benediction, haste, protect, save." In the dispensation of Providence, 'confession' and 'absolution' synchronise to the very moment. Instantly the darkness dissolves, the bonds break, the enemies vanish; and in the golden dawn, with a matin-song,

the saved one is seen nestled at the feet of the Saviour. Gajendra exemplifies one type of worshippers or devotees—the sinner saved or rather the strayer reclaimed. Against him stands forth that shining pattern of the other type, that peerless paragon of devotees, the immortal Prahlada.

Gajendra and Prahlada furnish an impressive parallel in the study of God's variant ways in fulfilling Himself. They are, so to speak, the two sides of the one shield—Gajendra, the side of slimestained silver which is 'seven-times tried' in the blast-furnace before it is burnished into the mirror of Divine Mercy; Prahlada, the side of pure gold which no acid of 'the world' can corrode and no fire of 'the flesh' can consume. From Gajendra to Prahlada it is the soul's ascent from the deep eroded glen to the sky-piercing peak. Prahlada is the chosen vessel, the consecrated chalice, for the spirit of godliness. His ante-natal vital-plasm itself is impregnated with holiness. Filled with the Unforgettable, he forgets all else. The cardinal principles of morality—

humanity, humility, purity, charity, veracity, amity, are in him, not merely touched by emotion into uplifting ideals, but quickened by devotion into spiritual fertilisers. He bears all the time-honoured marks of the God-possessed—soliloquising and sobbing by himself, singing and laughing with inner transport, now leaping-up in ecstasy, anon stock-still in absorption. His domicile is on those 'shining table-lands to which our God Himself is moon and sun.' He habitually moves amidst, is invariably accompanied by, those empyrean sights and ambrosial airs—those celestial visions and seraphic voices—that eternal Effulgence of which all the lights of the world are an irradiation and that universal Harmony in which all the sounds of the world are attuned into a song celestial. His soul has undergone, as Francis Thompson describes it, 'heavenly magnetisation by which it points always and unalterably towards God.' He is the incarnation of that 'sanctity' which, according to the same great mystic singer, 'is genius in religion.' Squared to this supreme spiritual strength is his God-assigned task in life. His Heaven-ordained

mission is, not merely to confute the erring unbelief which denies God and pronounces worship as inconsequential, but to 'convict' the arrogant egotism which defies God and denounces worship as self-abasing. Invulnerably panoplied, as he fancies, by a heavenly boom against assaults of all imaginable powers and potentates, Hiranyakasyapa 'assumes the God' and challenges his son to vindicate his faith in one higher than the world-controlling father. He ruthlessly subjects the son to every conceivable mode of torment. But the malignant agents of ferocious persecution—flame or flood, stone or steel, hunger or hemlock, cannot scathe or 'quell' the devotee of Hari. Humiliated and infuriated, the 'demon-king' demands ocular proof of the persistently proclaimed Narayana. "Where exists, in which quarter is to be spied, that phantom of which you incessantly prattle in a servile tone?" "For a certainty," answers the God-illumined one, "Iswara exists as the one eternal Reality; with a clearness that cannot be missed by any seeing eye, He is manifest everywhere: why this superfluous search here or there?

ఇందులలోనుండియు సందేహము కలదు (Away with all doubt whether here He exists or there He exists not!) This categorical answer is driven home with 'the Ever-lasting Yea'—'ఐశ్వర్యోపకరణం' (the Encircling One is implicit, as the ultimate Truth, in all). Let us note, by the way, that Prahlada does not argue with the acumen of the philosopher, but he asserts with the 'authority' of the seer. Again, what mine of meaning is comprised in that appellation of the Most High, *Chakri*! It denotes the 'circumambiance,' the love-embrace, of the Deity, within which the whole universe rests ensconced.—Stung to madness by this undaunted assurance of the youth, the heaven-challenging '*Asura*' rushes forth, sword in hand, with the cry, "Disclose thy Hari in this pillar of iron, or fall by my sword!" The serene answer to this mortal threat, "From gods to grass-blades, He permeates all; indubitably He is *ఐశ్వర్యోపకరణం*—the Indweller of this pillar; Him you shall behold now and here." How the inspired singer of this Divine Lay sends a sanctifying thrill through our souls with the profound observation that, as Prahlada

thus proclaims the Immanent God, the entire universe stands, through its myriad denizens, translucent with Divine Immanence! From all quarters, through all avenues, this holy light of an All-permeating Personality floods in upon the aweinspiring scene; "the confession of the lover," observes a Sufi exponent of *Laili va Majnun*, "is confirmed by the voice of the whole world; to the prayer of the lover, all mankind cries *Amen!*" The God-defier has no foot-hold in a God-indwelt world. Hiranyakasyapa hits with his haughty might, but reels and sinks to the ground with the supernal rebound. It is a law of the spiritual world that blind fury is hurled headlong by its own unbridled momentum. Prahlada, the vision-seer, stands vindicated. Nor is the God-defier annihilated—that would not be god-like. Forceful egotism implies, goes with, a developed intellect and a vigorous will—themselves qualities of no mean merit. Egotism excised, the residuum is the Lord's. Such is the Divine process of conservation. What erring mortals live and do, the God of grace will 'within Himself make pure'.—Gajendra and Prahlada, then,

stand for the two main classes of worshippers—both *bhaktas*, both devotees: he who is brought into worship and who is born into worship—he who proves God's all-saving goodness and he who proclaims God's all-sanctifying holiness—the misguided straggler divinely recovered and rehabilitated and the unflinching standard-bearer divinely habited and honoured.

This brief study of the two typical *bhaktas* imprints on our souls the commanding conviction that God's eternal design of salvation is all-inclusive, and that it is enjoined upon us to subserve that design. The great responsibility is reposed on each soul to labour, through worship and service, to win the whole world for God's Kingdom. To praise, to honour, to glorify God—that is the be-all and the end-all of the worshipper's life: 'Hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come!'—that is the sum-total of the devotee's prayer. This is enjoined on us not merely by Duty but also by Honour—by self-regard, by self-reverence. What is the real position? Between God and the humblest, lowliest son

of man, there can be absolutely no divorce. It is God, God alone, God everywhere. And the fulfilment of the purpose of our being consists in rendering back to God what is His by everlasting right—in not shirking from, but cheerfully accepting, our fullest responsibility to ensure His absolute possession of the universe, seeing how unlawful, how reprehensible, it should be to withhold anything from its rightful owner. '*Isavasyamidam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat*'.

Then another implication of Worship is that in His love God has created each one of us and has said, 'Thou art my child'. When we come to realise consciously the truth and purpose of our creation, the spontaneous expression of that realisation is the response, 'Yes; Thou art my Parent—Father and Mother in One.' There is absolutely no formality in this; it comes wholly of our realising and acknowledging an eternal fact. God for ever knows that fact; for me Worship marks the stage when *I, too*, have come to know it. God creates the world and beholds it to be good and

rejoices in it. That is the nature and function of *Anandam*. Man beholds it, too, and rejoices in it in his turn and pours forth his own *anandam* through *aradhana*. And even when he attains the stage of absorption, creation is not cancelled as an illusion. No; it is not cancellation but completion. As man is perfected through Worship, he is gifted with a continuous enjoyment of intense, ecstatic communion and companionship with God. The thought of God becomes the vital breath of life; the presence of God shines as a cloudless vision. "Once His gifts I owned; now Him alone." When Mahammad and his two friends lay concealed in a cavern and the enemies forces came up in hot pursuit, Abu Baker whispered, all in a tremor, 'We are only three against a host!' 'Nay, *four*', spontaneously avers the Prophet of God. *This never-failing One, this ever-entrancing One* is the God of our Worship.

Let us beware, then, of the illusion that there can be any happening or any occasion not to be related to God. He is no mere casual or even periodical visitor. The song

with which we went round this *Mandir* at its consecration the other morning, says, *Purushadheenam kinchinnasthi; Daivadheenam sarvamidam!* That is literally true—no fit of spiritual adulation or emotional exaggeration. Rather than that He is in all things, it is truer that this all, this *sarvam*, is in God. From within the halo of radiant transfiguration on the holy heights, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore exclaimed in the exulting phrase of Hafiz, ‘Bring no lamp into the audience-hall; the Full-moon, my Friend, Himself is shining here!’ ‘Heaven lies about us in our infancy,’ says the poet. As we grow, this impression fades away; the golden glow of the dawn pales into the stale day. But as there grows in him the Spirit of Worship, man’s new experience is summed up thus: ‘God *was around* us in our infancy; God *is within* us in our maturity; and we commune with God both within and around!’ That is the genuine mark, the real essence, of Worship. Although the tides of the spirit do at times cast us into situations so trying that our faith seems to be dashed into doubt and disbelief, yet the eternal verity remains un-

affected, that as the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere and all points are alike related to the *centre*, so God is related to, God embraces, all equally; all drawn with equal force to that Centre, all integrated with equal cohesion to that Centre, all ranged with equal reciprocity around that Centre. To realise this oneness in the Holy Spirit is Worship—not to run away from the Centre or to stand detached from the other points comprised in the circle, but, loyal to the Centre as the focus of *Sarvadheenam*, to own that the universe is God's and, therefore, I also belong to God, and hence I should and will, in this subservient position, render my humble all unto God and His universe. Thus, I shall justify my existence and vindicate the Divine in me by the solemn resolve and the strenuous endeavour, 'I will suffer none to be slighted as unprayed-for and uncared-for in God's universe.' For His own part, God presents the whole creation as His blank cheque in my favour, over His own sign-manual. I am unfriended? He says, 'Here is your Companion.' I am helpless? He says, 'Here is your Patron.' I am orphaned? He

says, 'Here is your Parent.' I am sinning? He says, 'Here is your Saviour.' Worship is our 'patented monopoly' of God's love and grace. My daughter, when a girl, happened to say something unkind about me. My mother's rebuke was, 'Why are you so harsh?' The defence was confidently put forth: ఎవరోసరిమని, దక్కెస్తూ ఎవరోసరిమనిననారే (why, for whose sake—not for mine but for his own sake, he needs must put up with it all. The next breath added the all-sufficing justification, కాబట్టికామామ? (for, is not he my own papa?) That is the noblest achievement of Worship—the acknowledgment, the acquisition, of God as the Supreme Parent, who is everything unto the child and from whom, therefore, the child can claim all consideration, all indulgence. Surely, out of the mouths of babes is wisdom spoken! Say, పితావోసి (Thou art our Father) and నమస్కారము (our salutations unto Thee); and thereupon you claim instruction, protection, redemption, benediction. Cognate with this is another story. My first niece, about five years of age, was seated by her little sister who was being nursed by their mother; it was the mango

season; she had been given a mango fruit and as she sucked in the nectar, she exclaimed in joy, *చెల్లి ఆమృతాన్ని పాలు తాగినట్లేవున్నది* (this is just like little sister sucking in milk from mamma!) Blessed truth that! Every fruit is *amritam* (nectar itself) from the bosom of the Divine Mother; and the essence of every gift is to be imbibed like milk from the mother. How profoundly true is the observation made by a certain devout soul that the spirit of the worshipper, bowing or kneeling or prostrate before the Deity, is in a posture identical with that of the child when it reclines on the maternal bosom as 'the spring and fount' of its life! Thus, become a child, and Worship becomes spontaneous. From babyhood we have been taught the roundness of this globe. But in the geography of the spirit, the round earth is verily the bosom of the Divine Mother, Geography calls this spherical orb the Earth: Religion calls it 'the Mother's Bosom.' Worship is this child-spirit of repose on that Bosom.

Indeed, my sisters and brothers, how pitifully bankrupt I find myself in the store of

right sentiment and the stock of apt expression to appraise the priceless blessings of Divine Worship—that Worship which traces the soul's translation into the heart of God; that Worship which fosters the soul into its second-birth in Eternal Truth and Infinite Love; that Worship which begets the sense of man's divine sonship, endowed with a princely heritage and honoured with a royal commission from his God; that Worship which, through the spousal vow of the soul to the Lord of Holiness, becomes the cradle of conscience and the nursery of righteousness! Worship exalts the cross over the crown and makes the monarch kneel to the martyr. Worship generates that spirit of 'catholic wholeness' which cultivates, with equal ardour, reverence for the highest and regardfulness for the humblest. Worship draws the currents of creativeness into the soul of the worshipper, and directs the recreated soul to recreate the world. Worship, which is antecedent to all creeds theologies, stuck that primeval note of praise in the human heart of which all latter hymnology is the amplification and set us that ancient oracle in the human soul of which

all later prophecy is the fulfilment. To the man of worship, with his purity and serenity communion with the Beautiful and the Good comes congenial and exhilarating like morning-dews and mountain-air to the healthful body. Worship, as it trains the human will in the ways of God, reveals the love which formulates the laws of nature and thus urges man to achieve his destiny through selfless service in love. To worship, the Author and preserver of the physical world is endeared as the fostering light and the bracing atmosphere of the growing character. To still the stormy passion, to quell the disruptive discord, to refresh the wearied spirit, to cheer the listless heart, to widen the narrow outlook, to serve out the feast of Inexhaustible Mercy, to strike up the music of Eternal Hope—these are the holy offices of Worship. The ‘alchemy’ of Worship transmutes the hearth into the altar, the school into the sanctuary, the mill into the granary, the prison into the hospital, the sentinel’s post into the steward’s cabin, the prodigal’s confessions into the son’s confidences. As creations of the genius of Wor-

ship, the grandest edifice is a cathedral, the noblest monument is a mausoleum, the sublimest verse is a psalm, the pleasantest journey is a pilgrimage, the happiest assembly is a congregation. In a word, Worship, which is the freest outpouring of the human heart in thankfulness and the intensest yearning of the human soul for communion, makes man the first-born of the Father's Love and the eldest child in the Father's Home. The great *sadhak* of the Worship of the *Paramamath* has pictured, in a charming analogue, the spirit of Worship as the entire effacement of the sense-bewitched self, with its desires and cravings, until the soul learns completely to confide, and joyfully to possess its all, in God. Man's career in life ought to be, we are taught, like the railway journey of a little child—with no ticket to purchase, no berth to reserve, no luggage to book, no provisions to carry; seated on the mother's lap, nourished from the mother's bosom, secure in the mother's arms, restful under the mother's smiles, the darling cherub is conveyed to its destination, which is, after all, the maternal mansion; enjoying the

freedom from care that a sage would covet and commanding a solicitousness of service that a prince would envy. Truly, the full formation of this child-spirit is the perfection of the *sadhan* of Worship.

So, let me conclude by repeating, 'Acknowledge this Divine Motherhood and cultivate this child-spirit of Worship'. This *Mandir* has been constructed and consecrated just for that purpose. It is meant for one and all who desire to approach and embrace the Mother. Here is an open door, day and night, for the Worship of the Mother. Enter at any time and hold your own sweet 'converse' with the Mother. The only appropriate and adequate prayer here shall be, 'I want my Mother, my All-in-all'. By all means, come and use the *Mandir*, one and all; welcome—thrice-welcome. There is nothing sinister, nothing dangerous, here. Only one condition is laid down: as we repair here for Worship, whether in small bands or in large companies, let us remember that to worship the Mother truly is to love every child of that Mother heartily. Says the Persian poet, "The sons of Adam are all

limbs one of another; for they are of one substance': issuing out of the one Spirit and children of the one Parent. Forsake man the brother, and God the Father is forsaken. It has been said of Dr. Johnson that, driving out on a very rainy day, he felt pity for a poor ill-clad woman plodding along the road with her baby in arms. He took the mother and child into his carriage, but sternly forbade all crooning and caressing. After a while, the woman forgot the injunction and began to fondle her darling with the usual 'nursery nonsense.' A warning was growled; a brief pause, and a second offence; and the lexicographer opened the door and turned out the woman and her senseless jargon. He could pity the woman but could not tolerate the mother; and as he rejected motherhood, he ejected all humanity. In the same fashion, we would have the Creator but would leave out His creature; and as we reject the creature, we eject the Creator. 'Love me, love my darling,' demands woman the mother; 'Love Me, love My darlings,' enjoins God the Parent. And the highest, fullest and noblest admission of this heaven-created brotherhood

is that we *pray together*. Hence, Shylock repudiates all true brotherhood with the Christian in sternly declaring "I will not *pray* with you"; In united prayer to God is the profoundest acknowledgment that all are brothers in God. A prisoner for years, his original name long since forgotten and himself known only as No. *so and so*, Jean Valjean gives to the Man of God, the good Bishop, his name and asks whether the Bishop knows it. The noble reply is, "That, I see, is your man-given name; but I already knew you by your God-given name—*my brother*." Thus, although familiar to us by no announced name, every woman is sister and every man is brother, because of the One Supreme Mother. Recognise the paramount bliss of this Worship and the beauty and the duty which it implies. Come and worship ye here as often as the child-spirit moveth in you! The Mother's richest blessings be with all Her children! And my heart's profoundest gratitude is my offering to Her for this dear House of Worship which She has vouchsafed to our City, as if in gracious fulfilment of my devoutest dream.

Om ! B'ahma Kripahi Kevalam !

GOD AND DEMOCRACY

(1929)

Members of the Federation of International Fellowship and Friends,

Let me first assure you that my heart enjoys the great satisfaction, and my soul receives the deep benediction, of this occasion, as we think of the auspices under which, the purpose for which, and the place at which, we are met here together. This is a meeting convened by that admirable institution whose motto I was simply delighted to note the other day. I must confess I had not previously informed myself of the details of your principles and ideals as embodied in your constitution. * Practically, that motto, 'Under Heaven, one Family,' summarises the address announced for this evening; therefore, our auspices are entirely noble. Again, the subject, if you

* Address to the International Fellowship, Cocanada Branch at the Brahmapasana Mandir, Cocanada (14-12-29).

will for a while forget the person that is to deal with it, is one of supreme importance and intense interest. Lastly, the place where we are met is a place always associated with the grand declaration of the spiritual rights of man in Rajah Rammohun Roy's immortal words, namely, a *Brahmopasana Mandir* meant as a place of meeting for all sorts and descriptions of people irrespective of the differences of caste, creed or community, provided they come with the single object of uniting in addressing their souls to the one great God in a spirit of humble consecration so as to imbibe into themselves the inspiration of the ever-adorable, all-perfect God and thereby to promote good-will and fraternal feelings amongst all. Thus, 'Under Heaven, one Family;' 'God and Democracy;' and a place of worship for all sorts and descriptions of people applying their souls to the one God—nothing could be more sacred, nothing more exhilarating to the spirit than an occasion like this.

The subject, as I have worded it, is 'God and Democracy.' Here is a book by

Dr. Frank Crane, D. D., of America; and that is the title of the book. I have adopted it, too, as the title of my address, chiefly because my thoughts have been directed to the great subject by a perusal of this book and largely because a good deal of what I had in my mind I found beautifully stated and confirmed, as humble souls like mine do require confirmation, in the utterances of this learned teacher.

'Democracy' is a word very much in the air just now. There is no word that sends such a thrill of elation into the minds of people, especially, of youth, as Democracy. It is like the rapture which the mediaeval mind is said to have experienced on the utterance of the word, 'El Dorado,' standing for an imaginary country where gold could be had for the getting. Democracy is the present-day panacea for all the ills flesh is heir to. The word is now such a pet word as to pass muster unchallenged everywhere, however improperly understood. We all want Democracy; and the conception of the average mind about it is similar to that of an old

student of mine who, when I said, 'How are you going to run Swaraj?', gave the ready answer, 'Why, sir, we will gird up at the British, set up our rule and go on governing.' This 'Democracy' is a favourite word just now. And even on that account, it is right and proper to own our interest in it and to dwell upon the conception behind it.

What is Democracy? It is differently defined by different people. The definition generally given is to be found in Murray's New Oxford Dictionary: that system of government in which the sovereign power is vested in the people and exercised directly by the people or their elected representatives. That seems a very entertaining definition. But Democracy is not always understood in this broad spirit. Byron is said to have entered a remark in his diary: 'Democracy? It means the autonomy of black-guards.' Different poets have assigned different epithets to the term. Milton speaks of fierce Democracy; another of wild Democracy. Somehow, there seems to be a fairly large volume of opinion hinting that in Democracy

there will be, to put it mildly, a medley of universal spirits. But if Democracy is going to be that salvation of human kind which we believe it is intended to be, surely Democracy cannot be characterised as mainly fierce or wild. It ought to be the very reverse of these suggestions. Then, how shall we conceive of this idea of Democracy? Mazzini, the great Italian patriot, the maker of Modern Italy, is reported to have defined Democracy as the peace and progress of all through all under the lead of the wisest and the best. Now, that at once expunges the idea of anything fierce or wild. And what remains after that? If my memory permit me to attempt it, I may give you the statement, equivalent to a definition, made by Emerson. He speaks of Democracy as the great constituency of religious, self-reliant, brave, tender people, faithful observers of duty, intense lovers of man, with loyalty to one another and a supreme concern in life so as to adapt private and public interests to the needs of mankind. That is a fairly good exposition of our subject. For the present, we shall accept it as a working definition and proceed to a

closer and minuter study of the details implied in it.

The first question is, Has God a place in Democracy? Soviet Russia says, 'No.' And there are some, I need not name them for fear of defamation, who, in our land also, the so-called land of religion, have gradually come to the position that Religion, at any rate, is a negligible little thing, if not a positive detriment to progress. There are individual agencies and concerted agencies propagating this view that Religion is a game played out and is now a hindrance to human progress. Among many, at all events, there prevails the opinion, 'Let not Religion encroach on Politics. Keep the two strictly apart. The overshadowing of Politics by Religion would be a source of unnumbered woes'. But as a certain writer has observed, man is incurably religious. It is one of his characteristics that you cannot cure him altogether of the religious instinct in him. It may be that the presentation of the position varies from time to time and from clime to clime. It may be that when Turkey ex-

tended up to the Danube, what was blasphemy on one side was pure religion on the other as between Christianity and Islam. But howsoever men may have differed or may differ over its details, the one thing that has persistently and irrepressibly dogged the footsteps of man is Religion. What Francis Thompson has called the Hound of Heaven has been hounding human nature always. It is not given to man to escape this pursuit. In Democracy, then, Religion is to be not only not a secondary concern but the supreme concern, the all-absorbing problem. God is a most indispensable pre-requisite to the growth of the spirit of Democracy. As the constitution of your Federation of International Fellowship has it, the belief in God affords the strongest and highest incentive to the brotherhood of man. Therefore, far from being banished, God has to be brought home to our bosoms and our business, if we are to receive, cherish and propagate the spirit of Democracy. It will do us good to pause for a while over this point, this most essential aspect of our subject. Now, what do we understand by God; and how do we conceive the idea of

God? It is a most enrapturing idea that Dr. Crane puts forward when he describes God as full of service unto the world. God is the First Servant, the Servant of servants, the Chief Democrat in the universe. The one idea that runs through the book here before me—and upon it must turn all our reflections this evening—is that, as Democracy advances, our concept of God should, so to speak, radically shift from God the Ruler to God the Servant. God is the Servant of all. At once the thought suggests itself: There can be no servant unless there is a household; you do not take a servant and put him in a Sahara. God, then, is the Chief Servant in His own household, the Household of Humanity. And as our author so impressively puts it—it cannot but move every soul when he so reminds us—when the whole household is asleep, the Servant is ever awake, engaged first and foremost in keeping up the heart-pumps and sustaining the life wrapped up in sleep. God is the Servant of whom the Upanishad has beautifully sung, ‘*Anoraneeyan mahathomaheeyan.*’ This Servant-God is never asleep. Sometime back, during

the session of the Indian National Congress here, some of our Brahmo friends came over, too, for the All-India Theistic Conference, and among them, Prof. N. G. Welinkar and his good wife. As one of us pressed them to prolong their stay a while longer in our midst during those general holidays, Mrs. Welinkar simply observed, 'A *mother* has no holiday.' So the Divine Mother has—needs and takes—no holiday ; because holiday means fatigue, and fatigue means discontent with work. But the work of the Divine Servant is dear to Him ; and He does it because He is Divine. Side by side with working the heart-pump and the lung-bladder, He is distilling the dews, wafting the breezes, bringing down the showers, painting the lily and producing food for the entire household for each morrow. As one of the devotees sings in Urdu, 'Thou art here as the Perfect One, even because the daily bread of the universe is in Thy hand.' Thus, the God of Democracy is God the Servant. And He, the God of Nature and the God of Human Nature, He is wonderfully self-concealing. He wants no praise, no recognition. He conceals Him-

self behind the phenomena of the world. And through unfailing familiarity, we grow so purblind that our thoughts, feelings and expressions of appreciation of, and gratitude for, goodness stop short, all on this side of God, with this friend or that benefactor. We forget that He who is the Indweller is also Propellor and the whole course of life is under His sway and control even as the Servant-God. Through service, He serves mankind. It is not through governing, through controlling, through teaching, but through serving that He carries on the cosmic processes. As the serving God, He becomes the Supreme Democrat. Everyone who believes in Democracy is imperatively called upon, likewise, to realise and justify himself through loving service. He alone can be a true democrat who finds his joy in service. Just as God the Servant is God the Saviour, so under a system of true Democracy service and salvation become convertible terms. We are saved through service. Thus we find that Work and Worship are interlinked; and where genuine work has to be done, true worship has to be cultivated. Work that is

not subservient to the evanescent purposes of daily physical needs but, like seed sown on fertile soil, has to grow from generation to generation—such work can find its stimulus alone in Worship, not that worship which merely begins with, and ends in, certain rituals and liturgies but that true worship in which the human spirit comes, as it were—why ‘as it were,’ for that is the essence of it?—into rapturous communion with the Power, Wisdom and Beneficence that holds the helm of the whole universe in Its hand. The helm of the world, says Emerson, is not in our hands but in the hands of that Supreme Admiral who knows the way and can and will land us safe ashore. Worship, the rapturous reunion of the human and the Divine, is the starting point of all abiding work. A certain writer on Prayer truly observes: Scan closely the life-history of great men and great movements; and you will find that every moment began not only with a worshipping soul but exactly when that soul was in profound communion with the Deity. In Democracy, there is reciprocity between Work and Worship. They

are parts of the same soul-hymn—Worship the music and Work the language of that hymn. The first, the chief interest of potent, progressive, prosperous Democracy lies, if I may use the expression, in calling back straying souls to the worship of the Lord with the distinct understanding that the Lord to be worshipped is the Great Servant, the Chief Servant, of the Household of Humanity—even He who saves by His service and thus proves Himself the most potent Democrat of all. What is it that Democracy aims at? Is not its aim the complete elimination of all the artificial distinctions that, what with man's ignorance and what with man's insolence, have through ages been created and perpetuated in human society? Yes; the purpose of Democracy is to eliminate all man-made barriers and consolidate human kind into a single household. In a household, of course, there will be seniors and juniors—those who advise and those who follow. But the bed-rock on which the household is established is the reciprocal equality of appreciation and affection. Hence, we have to recognise this fact,

namely, that only to the extent to which I am wedded to Work have I any rightful place in Democracy. As Emerson has said, begin as an epicurean and end as a felon! Similarly, start as a drone and close as a fool! In Democracy, these varieties of human nature have no place—neither the epicurean who believes in creature comforts as the *summum bonum* of life nor the drone who fancies life as granted only to dream and idle away. Those who grasp beyond their proportion and those who hold back behind their limit are alike exiles. Thou shalt not take more than thy share. Neither shalt not take more than thy share. Neither shalt thou withhold even an iota of thy contribution. Thus, in every true Democracy, Work and Worship go together. Only to the extent to which worshipful work is put into the common store are we citizens of true Democracy.

Now, let us proceed a step further. What are the characteristics of a democracy? One main feature is the concentration of attention and energy on Education. Dr. Crane very rightly and humorously says that Democracy

without Education is a joke with no seriousness about it. The Literary Supplement to the London *Times* observes that Illiteracy is the greatest menace to Democracy. Therefore, the root, the tap-root, of practical life in a democracy is the zealous spread and propagation of Education. It is a very, very poor type of civilisation when, as happens today, more money is spent on the Police than on the Schools. Said an ardent advocate of Education: We believe the day will come when all wise persons will become workers of Government alone and concentrate on the work of Education. And that is because, whereas every other system of Government remains stolidly content with the horizon of the present, true Democracy extends it into the far future. Unto the men of the work-a-day world, the present is all in all. But unto him in whom the democratic spirit is operative, the present is only the seed-plot of the future; and the man and the woman of today have no justification for existence except as parents of the child to come. It is as the human heart is made the cradle of love for a child that it comes closest to the teaching of blessed Jesus, who said the Kingdom of

Heaven was made of such as children. The principal obligation or condition of Democracy, then, is Education. Here let us bear it clearly in mind that Education does not mean, as current parlance has it, only the three R's. No; as those who have bestowed thought upon this subject have observed, in a Democracy Education cannot be confined to the three R's by any means but must be richly supplemented with the three arts—namely, of believing, hoping and reverencing. As Carlyle reminds us, only to the extent to which we cultivate these essential arts are we worth something at all. In the first place, universal disbelief, belief in nothing good and true and enduring—this is what reduces man below the level of the brute. Belief in something supremely real, in that which, like the sun, will survive the passing, eclipsing cloud, is the fundamental possession of a living soul. As Carlyle himself has said, this belief is the assured conviction that this world is under the government of One who is the eternal Enemy of all that is unjust and, therefore, that justice must prevail evermore in the long run. And not

only this; but belief in ourselves, the consciousness in each which avers, 'I am here not like the moth of the moment to feed and perish, but like the seed of eternity to grow from age to age.' The art of believing—what is it, then, we believe in? We believe in the government of the world unto wise and noble ends; and Education, if true and sound, must implant this belief in every heart, while we are here in the course of a great and unending process of the self-unfolding of truth and righteousness. The second art is the art of hoping—hoping in spite of all appearances to the contrary; hoping, as Carlyle, again, has said, not as a conjectural possibility but as an inextinguishable light in the heart, that, in the words of Tennyson, good shall be the final goal of ill, for all evil must fade and vanish before good; nay, more, that all seeming evil shall be metamorphosed into good in the process of God. Thirdly, there is the art of reverencing whatever is truly worthy, bountiful and beautiful, not hampered by considerations of race or rank, place or time, and not in a spirit of condescending appreciation but of humble

regard and esteem. If you look at a flower and are elated at its colour and fragrance and stop short there, you are only the creature of the senses. But if you feel so thrilled with the holy awe of the presence of the Universal Beautiful and the Universal Charming One in that flower, you see it not with the eye of sense but with the eye of the seer. Emerson found a blooming rose in the field and exclaimed, 'This is holy ground!' This reverencing attitude towards the highest and the loftiest enriches one in a manner that cannot be easily estimated. Jesus with his disciples was nearing a town. They were at the outer gate. There lay the carcass of a dog in an advanced stage of putrefaction. The companions held their noses and said, 'How unbearable the stench!' But the Master observed, 'Behold; pearls are not whiter than his teeth!' Thus it is you carry hope to the despondent heart and awaken in him who considers himself lost the faith and the aspiration that he cannot be lost. As Swami Vivekananda has taught us, when you meet a sinner, you cannot do better than gently remind him that

he can be, and is bound to be, a better man. Thus reverencing what lies hidden, what the world only misses or what to the eye of flesh appears but commonplace—this constitutes the highest graduation in Education. Dr. Martineau ranks reverence as the crowning virtue along the gradation of virtues. As Professor Blackie has said, it is a very deplorable state of mind — that of *nil admirari*. We have a very instructive story of two persons sent out into the world to see and report how much of good they found in it. One goes out and comes back with the report, 'So far as I can see, there is no one good at all.' The other brings the account, 'None bad except myself.' Here is the difference between irreverence and reverence. It is the spirit of irreverence that is not moved by objects and accidents that ought to draw out the best in us. To stand stolid and say there is nothing good is to betray the beggar in ourselves. Accordingly, in every system of Democracy, wholesome education wisely and widely gives every training in the three arts of believing, hoping and reverencing. And when Education is

taken up as the prime problem of Democracy, what is it that happens? Modern civilisation is defined as Anarchy *plus* the Police; but the civilisation of Democracy will be Government *minus* the Police—that is, self-government possible only through a prolonged process of training and discipline. Pope has said every profession and art requires some training, except one—that of the critic. We are here in this world, not to be critics, but admirers. The worst criticism is appreciation. This art of admiration makes life not only sweet but sublime, not only beautiful but exalted. And when that is sought to be, and is, done, not only will there be schools every where but jails nowhere. What is a jail? As Dr. Crane has said, it is a symbol of the fact that the criminal and the world stand pitted against each other. The world says, 'You have stuck me; and I strike back.' Jails will yield place to reformatories in true Democracy. 'Till just a few years back, they spoke of lunatic asylums; now they call them mental hospitals. Surely, in Democracy there will be no jails but moral hospitals; and the criminal will be simply a moral patient, one

in whom passion has got the better of sense; and the duty of society will be to take him up and cure him. It will be not merely the cure of the body, not only the cure of the mind, but also the simultaneous process of the cure of the spirit. It is said of John Wesley that when he saw a culprit being led up to the jail, he exclaimed, 'There goes John Wesley but for the grace of God!' How sublime! We ought to reflect on it. In Democracy, every criminal will be thus treated. The only way in which I can evince my gratitude for being saved from criminality is to carry that saving grace to every brother of a criminal. In Victor Hugo's monumental work of unsurpassed genius, Jean Valjean observes to the Bishop, 'I have not told you my name.' The Bishop says, 'But I know you by your other name.' Number 45? 'No; no, I knew you by your other name, namely *my brother*.' Thus, every convict, unto every man of grace, bears the other name of *my brother* or *my sister*. So, Education under Democracy will spread so far as to replace jails by moral hospitals and spiritual reformatories.

Next, let us come to Trade. The present-day rule about Trade, as Ruskin says, is: The buyer will cheapen; and the seller will cheat. And this rule is considered perfectly sound. Let the buyer be on his guard not to be cheated. But when you come to the ideal commonwealth, markets will have their martyrs as much as pulpits, and the merchant's business will be to produce reliable articles and sell them as cheap as the conditions permit. As Dr. Crane says in a startling manner, in Democracy there will be no place for altruism; because the sole rule will be justice, which demands and should give all that is due to another. According to this paradoxical way of putting it, altruism and justice will become synonymous. In Democracy, business will be regulated by this principle, namely, not to take any undue, unjustifiable advantage over another. I conduct business; but I am there to contribute my share to the world's commodities. In Miss Edgeworth's *Moral Tales*, there is a tale called 'Lilliputian Traces'—little boys dealing in articles. One is selling melons. He says, pointing to a fruit, 'This is worth 7s. 6d.'

'And that bigger one?' 'That is 2s. 6d.' 'How can that be? The bigger cheaper than the smaller?' 'Yes, sir; the one is all sound, but the other is rotten'. There it is. Get your due; but give every one his due. Until we attain to this state, to talk of Democracy is profane.

The first axiom of Democracy, then, is that God is the God of the people; and, therefore, the people should be dealt with and respected as we should deal with and respect the Deity. There is a story in Gladstone's life that he took to Her Majesty Queen Victoria for her signature a Bill that had been passed by both Houses of Parliament. But it was a bill Her Majesty did not herself like. So she declined to sign it. 'Please do sign; for you must. Your Majesty is the Sovereign of England. But I am the People of England.' The Queen bit her lip, affixed the signature and said in chagrin, 'Go.' Thus exalted sovereignty says 'Go away'; whereas God, the Supreme Sovereign says, 'The people are Mine'. In all dealings, the people shall be treated as the people of God. You have read

that fine lyric about the King and the Beggar in Rabindranath's *Gitanjali*. The Beggar has been abegging from door to door in the village path. The glorious One was passing along in a golden chariot. The Beggar stood fast, waiting for alms amidst wealth to be scattered about on all sides. The Lord stepped out of the chariot and came down with a smile to where the beggar was stationed, and held forth his right hand, saying, as though in grim jest, 'What hast thou to give to me?' The beggar put his hand into his wallet and, in a beggarly spirit, took out the smallest grain of corn and gave it to the Lord. He seized it with joy; and the procession moved on. The beggar went home and emptied the contents of the bag on the floor and found one little grain of gold in the paltry heap. Thus it is that the Lord God is the Lord of the people. He receives the humblest gifts of the people and returns them with gold. In Democracy, all dealings among the members of a community are to be as among the people of the Lord.

Now, there are various other directions

in which the spirit of Democracy has to show itself. The aspect I should like to revert to for a while before I close is that of the Religion of Democracy. Democracy, says Dr. Crane, will be freely, unaffectedly and intensely religious. What is that religion which Democracy will accept as its faith? If I may be permitted to put it in parallel antitheses, the religion of Democracy will be the religion, not of creeds but of convictions, not of dogmas but of devotions, not of exegetics but of experiences, not of ritual but of righteousness, not of controversy but of concord. And that religion will steadily and increasingly disclose the fact that, as rivers spring out of the same mountain-caves but are impelled in various directions that all the adjoining country might be watered and enriched, each flowing in its ordained course but all combining to make the atmosphere cool and the soil fertile, and all marching ahead to the same main, even so all religions are ordained by the same God, come out of the same lofty heights of Divine inspiration, flow in divers directions to benefit divers peoples and become confluent in living hearts

towards the same goal of Right and Righteousness. As we thus come to feel that it is from the same source that all Dispensations proceed and as their common substance spreads its import and inspiration, we shall see how, as Emerson has said, Jove nods to Jove from 'behind each one of us. When Jove thus beckons to Jove, we are all under the influence of the Supreme One. There is quite a lot to tell; but I shall conclude with the words of America's noblest seer and of America's tenderest singer. Adopting, to some extent, the language of Emerson, I may say that in true Democracy, not politics, not trade, alone will form the favoured aim of men; but every useful occupation and every elegant art, the highest ascent of reason and the richest exercise of affection, aye, the noblest experience of religion, all will embody themselves in institutions which shall write out superb laws for, and set shining examples to, the whole human race. It is this very Spirit of Democracy, pure and holy, broad and generous, simple and penetrating, that Whittier apostrophises, as he sings:

“Bearer of Freedom’s holy light,
Breaker of Slavery’s chain and rod,
The foe of all which pains the sight,
Or wounds the generous ear of God!

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“The generous feeling, pure and warm,
Which owns the right of all divine;
The pitying heart, the helping arm,
The prompt self-sacrifice, are thine.

“Beneath thy broad, impartial eye,
How fade the lines of caste and birth!
How equal in their suffering lie
The groaning multitudes of earth!

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“By misery unrepelled, unawed
By pomp or power, thou seest a Man
In prince or peasant, slave or lord,
Pale priest, or swarthy artisan.

“Through all disguise, form, place, or name,
Beneath the flaunting robes of sin,
Through poverty and squalid shame,
Thou lookest on the man within.

“On man, as man, retaining yet,
However debased, and soiled, and dim,
The crown upon his forehead set,
The immortal gift of God to him.”

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF LOVE.

(1930)

Sisters and Brothers in the Household of
the Universal Father,

From the ancient world comes a pretty anecdote of Chinese origin that a certain seeker after truth presented himself before a revered teacher and said, 'Can you sum up all the books for me in one word?' The prompt reply was 'Reciprocity', paraphrased into '*Atmavatsarvabhoothani*' and, again, into 'Do unto others as you would be done by.' Thus the sum-total of the moral code was condensed into that one word — Reciprocity. If Religion should amplify and sanctify Morality, as the moral code could be summed up into the one word, 'Reciprocity,' so the essence of the whole body of religious truth could be distilled into the single word,

* At the Andhra Theistic Conference, Puttapuram, with Rao Sahib Dr. V. Ramakrishna Rao as President (28—12—30).

'Charity' in the classic sense of 'Love.' There is warrant enough for this statement from one of the great leaders of the Brahma Samaj, the venerable Babu Raj Narayan Bose, the right-hand man of Maharshi Devendra-nath Tagore. If he were asked to describe Brahmaism in one word, that word, he said, should be 'Love.'

Now, what is the first implication of this proposition that Religion, the whole domain of it, consists in Love? It is not the wisdom, not the power, not the omnipresence — none of these noteworthy attributes — of God, but it is His love and love alone that can furnish a valid explanation for the existence of the universe and provide an adequate ground and an enduring stamina for it. Wisdom may plan but cannot create. Power may create but cannot design. Similarly, the other modes of possible Divine self-expression will be found rather circumscribed in some way. It is all comprehensive Love, into which enters the wisdom, not of cunning inquisition, but of penetrating insight, and flows the might, not of the propelling machine, but

of the evolving spirit, that can account for the creation of the world. The whole building material, so to speak, of the universe is Love. To continue the figure, the entire edifice, from the basal concrete to the crowning cupola, consists of the substance of Love. If creation is the 'life-garment' of the Deity, Love forms the warp and woof of that translucent fabric. The metaphysics of creation can be satisfactorily expounded only on the principle of love, which connotes both the ardour and the resource—the wish and the will—the design and the delight—to create. All other possibilities of activity stop short somewhere. It is love alone that constitutes the ceaseless spring—the inexhaustible reserve — of both the wisdom and the power to create. Therefore it is we say that, as against the scientist with his law and system, the philosopher with his cause and consequence and the historian with his process and result, the religionist alone rightly appraises the universe as the emanation—the self-expression—of Divine Love. We understand the meaning of Philosophy itself when we construe it in terms of Love. Strip any

statement of truth of this one vital element of love and it becomes not only infidelity but aridity itself. Love alone is fecund, productive, multiplicative, reciprocative. Accordingly, the first implication of Love is that creation can be accounted for only as the offspring of Love. And this is not a latter-day belief. It has been the message of the great, the inspired ones of all ages and countries. Everywhere, the true seer has declared that God, moved by impelling love, has brought the world into being. Be it noted, in passing, as the basic truth of this theme, that the God of Love is the Supreme Person — *Paramapurusha*, owning in unbounded amplitude the distinguishing faculty of introspecting, energising and organising personality — namely, awareness of self, perception of non-self and comprehension of the 'twain' in the unity of being, of conjugate life and confluent love. Love is 'an unsubstantial dream,' a fanciful figment, except as repositied in, and welling up from, a person.

The second implication is: If we desire a free and welcome access to God, it must

be only through the gate of Love. It is with the outreaching heart of love alone we can rise up to our God. Under all conditions, be they of elation or of depression, of satisfied fulness or of starving privation, God becomes desirable and available only when He is realised as the God of Love. As the God of Wisdom, we esteem Him; as the God of Might, we obey Him; even as the God of Holiness, we revere Him. Only as the God of Love do we confide and rejoice in Him. That saintly anchoress, Julian, notes how Truth sees, Wisdom beholds, and Love has a holy, marvelling delight in, God. If there is to be provided unhesitating accessibility to God for one and all, it must be through the inviting portal of Love. What has already been indicated is merely the obverse side of this truth—namely, if it is through love alone that God can be gained by all, He must be the God of Love thus to be gained. To seek affinity, through a particular sentiment, with one whose predominant quality is different—that is not sagacity, not even policy. The characteristic of the Creator which comprises and focusses in itself all His other character-

istics is Love. And the God of Love creates the world through the innate urge of Love; and He is accessible to His creatures through the welcoming entrance of Love. All this is summed up in the Fatherhood of God—not merely creation but self-reproduction, not detached manufacturing but intimate self-imparting. Therefore, the God of Love is that Creator who gives Himself in and through creation. The God of Love as the Creator is not a far-off God whose fiat brought the world into being and who has veiled Himself after having enunciated laws and disclosed them to certain receptive minds. He is not only the creating but also the companioning, continuing and completing God. In the opening verse of our *Gosthi-prardhana*, we own that God is, first of all, the Creator; then, the Continuer: next, the Unifier; and finally, the Perpetuator. *Namasthey satheythey jagathkaranaya*—the ever real Creator; *Namasthey chithey sarvalokasrayaya*—the ever vivifying Protector: *Namodvaitha-thathwaya muktipradaya*—the all-harmonising Emancipator; *Namo Brahmaney vyapiney saswathaya*—the eternal Perpetuator. He is at once

the originating Cause, the protecting Providence, the unifying Harmoniser, the progressive Emancipator and the everlasting Perpetuator. He is alike the self-expressing, the self-donating, the self-realising and the self-resuming God. We have to recognise this as the essence of religion that God figures forth in creation, unfolds the process of evolution, converges into the harmony of a multiplex unity and for ever abides in love and manifests Himself in love and, therefore, becomes accessible only through and unto love.

The third implication is this. If it is a God of Love that is the Creator of the universe, all His laws—and they are only His uniform ways, not once for all, but momentarily, promulgated—must be closed up in the one law, 'the Law of Love'. Love is creation's final law, albeit Nature *appeared* in tooth and claw and her volcanoes rage forth in devastating lava. Accordingly, for me as for Himself, God has for ever ordained the self-same law of love. Thou shalt conduct thyself in love; thou shalt judge by love; thou shalt determine all standards of

valuation in the spirit of love; thou shalt accept love as the prime law of thy life; even as God, in His own governance, rules according to the universal law of love. All other so-called laws are, not God's ordained edicts, but man's misreadings of God's ways. The law of barbarism with its 'tooth for tooth and eye for eye; even the law of reciprocity with its 'give and take,' and, indeed, the law of equality with its 'I as thee and thou as me'—all these merely temporise, more or less. In truth, there is one and only one section in the Code of God—namely, Love. As the poet has observed, from inception to perfection it is all 'Give love, live love.' What is the unique characteristic of Love? It gives; it lives; it never asks for any return or recognition. Ever giving, never demanding—this is writ large on the illumined scroll of Nature. As a well-known Indian chant has it—shines not the sun for its own glory; flows not the river for its own benefit; stands not the tree for its own comfort; lives not the good man for his own profit. As the sun shines and asks for no recognition, as the river flows and demands no reward, as the

tree affords shade and looks for no recompense, so the good man, under the Heaven-sanctioned Code of Love, gives ever and demands never. In a certain exceedingly instructive novel, the servant says, 'Master is good to all but one;' and the Master puts in down to the old, old complaint of servants about their neglect by their masters. But, in truth, the servant's idea is that Master takes thought of all except his own self. In a sublime sense, Love always takes thought of every one save the self. God takes thought of all except Himself. How profound, then, the Love of God—to shower blessings evermore and expect none in return! Of man's incurable discontent we have a confession in the saying: God gives much to many, but not enough to any. That is our chronic complaint. But just as, from God, it is ever giving and never demanding, so the man of God seeks to order his life by the same rule of ever giving and never demanding. The result will be, no doubt, poverty, ever-increasing poverty; but it is that hallowed, blessed poverty which is richer than the amplest wealth. For it is the poverty, not of want, but of complete self-consecration.

I possess nothing, not because I am denuded of possessions, but because it is the luxury of my life not to possess anything for the gratification of the self. In Christian writings there is a reference to marrying Lady Poverty. As St. Francis of Assisi has said, rich men are waited on by servants and poor men by God Himself. This is divine poverty. And it is this course of life that Religion enjoins by the prompting from within: 'Thou shalt possess nothing but have all!' Here, while on this subject of giving, let me invite attention to one profound observation of Victor Hugo. It is far easier, he declares, to give than to forgive. Most of us are able to give; but how disappointingly few are they that can forgive! And the reason for it is plain enough. When I give, I part with my possessions—perhaps, some superfluities; but when I forgive, I have to give up what I praise as my precious self. As fame is the last infirmity of noble minds, this *aham* (self) is the last possession of most men—hardest to give up. How to forego this coveted self? There is the crux. But to forgive will become as easy as to give,

when we are ruled and guided by the Law of Love. And again to give I have few opportunities; but to forgive I have almost numberless occasions. How often we behave like the child that kicks the chair it knocks against! We knock against the world; and then, in a fit of fretfulness, we kick that world which we are placed here below really to kiss. Thus, it is this ubiquitous ghost of self that has to be overmastered. Einstein, as great in spiritual insight as in scientific investigation, observes that the true value of man is assessible by how far, and in what sense, he has succeeded in obtaining freedom from self, that is in surrendering self to Love. Self has been given, to be neither pampered nor rejected, but to be disciplined into surrender; just as talent is given, to be neither thrown away nor buried, but to be laid out for the spirit's kith and kin and thus dedicated to Love. Then the human self becomes an integral part of the Divine Self. That is the spousal of the Deity and the devotee in Love. And such is the grace of Love that its charm is plain and patent to one and all. Wisdom may be too deep

for most men, but Love is never un-understandable. Says the mystic: God, infinite and absolute, is inaccessible to the Intellect but close and familiar to the Heart. Therefore, man shall greet man, man shall deal with man, under the regimen of Love. Every other rule must fail somewhere and somehow. Love alone can constitute the unifying power and the vivifying and enlarging stimulus of all human relations—domestic, national and international. Love and Love alone shall be the rule for all the interests and activities of life. For there is something lovable in every one. There exists none with unrelieved repulsiveness. Even the blackest cloud has a silver lining. As a certain profound thinker has said, Love's function is to win the unlovable into loveliness. Love spies out the lovable in the unlovely. Aye, Love transforms every object into the handsome, not merely passable but attractive. And how? By revealing the divinely-designed reciprocities between soul and soul, so that none can do without another. Just as, in the organism of the universe, the minutest satellite is indispens-

able unto the whole cosmos, so, in the realm of the spirit, there is such intimate interlinking between soul and soul that, for the perfection of any one individual, it is absolutely true that none other can be dispensed with. A wise man was asked from whom he had learnt his wisdom; and his answer was, 'From fools! For, whatever others disliked in them I avoided with care.' Another sage was asked, 'Why do you not sell or give away your troublesome slave?' 'Why, then, I shall lose the opportunity of learning patience'. These stories illustrate the principle of universal reciprocity. From the most unpromising soil, we rear an abundant harvest of good. According to the Golden Rule of Love, the universe is forged into one compact chain; and to weaken a single link is to impair the strength of the whole. Consequently, he who would attain to the God of Love must not merely tolerate but esteem the humblest handiwork of the God of Love. Hence, the standard and the test that will be applied to us on the day of reckoning: 'Have you loved well?'—not 'How much have you learnt?', or 'How

much have you achieved?', or even 'How much have you given?'. To that dread question from the Judgment-throne, he who can answer, 'I have tried my utmost to live love'—he alone can face the ordeal.

Briefly to sum up, in closing. The edifice of the entire universe is constructed with the substance of Love, not of Wisdom or of Power. Therefore, the particular characteristic of God which shall be our supreme thought and sure knowledge of God is that He is the God of Love. And the only way to the realisation of God is through the avenue of Love. If, then, our approach to God be possible and free only through the avenue of Love, it must be a love that gives all and demands nought. Such love leads to divine poverty—lacking nothing, for it would save nothing for the self. Love is the divining-rod of the soul to discover the secret springs of heavenly grace and the hidden treasures of human worth. The refreshing showers, the bracing zephyrs, the entrancing fragrances, the enchanting notes, the enrapturing sights—all are *my* possessions. I hold them in 'fee simple'. Who dare call

me poor, with these imperishable possessions? When God has granted me the 'second sight' of love with which I can behold the priceless pearl in the dew drop, enjoy regal glory in the rain-bow and treasure (in Rabindranath's good-tidings) flowers as the love-missives of the Beloved inscribed in coloured ink on living enamel—why, to call that poverty is an outrageous misnomer. Poverty for love is wealth itself. He who owns this poverty gives of himself abundantly in proportion to the increase of his poverty. As for the still harder exercise of forgiveness, he forgives, too, no less readily and freely, as he grows in this poverty through Love. Rather, he feels he has no need to forgive at all. For, when did he take any offence that he has now to forgive? Have we not heard the blissful story about Tukaram?—how, returning home with a bundle of sugar-canes a disciple had presented to him one evening, he parted with all the canes but one to the persons he met with on the way and, at length on reaching home with the one solitary cane, he was confronted by his wife, a sharp-tongued Xanthippe, with the query,

‘Who could be that niggardly creature that presented you with this single stick?’ Then, as he explained the facts, she belaboured him with that very cane; and as it broke into two pieces, he picked up one and exclaimed ‘You, as a very loving wife, must share even this single sugarcane with your husband’. If, thus, there is no occasion to forgive, there is, however, every occasion to give. Innumerable are the opportunities God grants for the exercise of Love. Have we not heard of the Greek slave-sage, Epictetus?—how his master was hard-hearted and, for some slight lapse on his part, put his leg into the torturing machine? Says the sage, ‘Don’t you apply it too hard. I shall, at that rate, become a cripple and be of no use to you hereafter? With the broken leg, in old age, he can say, ‘You, younger men, may go about freely and enjoy the blessings of life. Grey-haired and lame, I am thankful I can sit down and glorify my God.’ There is a mistake—a confusion—in the thought that he who loves man thereby loves God. The cardinal principle is: Love God and not another in His stead; and love Him for His own sake.

A certain *Sufi* states that there are but three steps between man and God: with the first, kick away this world; with the second, kick away the next world; and with the third, you stand before God Himself. The poet sings of 'the kindred points of heaven and home.' But let us rise a step higher and say, 'the single point of heaven and home.' Detach Home from Heaven, and Home is a prison-cell; detach Heaven from Home, and Heaven is a mirage. Heaven is Home, and Home is Heaven. When we not only come into life in love and continue in life in love but live in the home in love, can we imagine a higher Heaven? Said a mystic: In Islamic cosmogony, there are seven skies and eight heavens. 'If so, where are they located?' 'Seven of the eight heavens are in the seven skies, and the eighth is in your heart.' When that eighth heaven—the highest heaven, aye, the true heaven—has been received into thee, thou art, not a denizen of heaven, but the abode of heaven. So God is not in Heaven; but Heaven is in God—Heaven is God Himself. The final test, then, is: To what extent have I surrendered self to Love?

To the extent to which I am able to say, 'Lord! Lord! Through the grace of Thy imparting, I have caught a whisper of the ineffable truth, *Brahma Kripahi Kevalam*'; God is Love alone, or, as they have it in Tamil scripture—*Anbey Sivam*. Not in figure of speech or in suggestive symbol but in the barest fact, in the simplest truth, God is Love itself. He who has received this Gospel of Love bears the image of God mirrored in his soul. He becomes an integral part of God. And they that are thus integrated with God and in God—what are they not? *Amrithasya puthrah!* 'All are the undying offspring of one Sire.'

HIGHER MORALITY AND DEEPER SPIRITUALITY*

(1931)

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Ram Mohan was the far-sighted pioneer who first proclaimed the verified possibility of the union of all believers and worshippers in the harmony of one ideal, one aspiration, one endeavour and one fellowship. Consequently, we are here, on this occasion, to rejoice in that grand message. I have a great mind, at the present moment, to unfold this aspect, so far as it lies in me, through a particular illustration. Ram Mohan, as I say, was a gifted harmoniser of religious beliefs and ideals. In accordance with this lofty aim, he presented to the followers of

* Extract from the Presidential remarks at Brahmopasana Mandir, Cocanada, at the 101st anniversary of the Brahma Mandir and Trust-Deed of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy (25-1-1931).

each of the various faiths those noble elements in it which fitted admirably into this praiseworthy purpose of being harmonised with other faiths and fused with them into one conjoint hope and aspiration for all. So he published very informing and illuminating tracts bearing on the faith of the Hindus as deposited in the Upanishads and also, to a certain extent, in the Brahma Sutras. Likewise, to the Christians he strove to present those essential elements in their scripture which could be worked into harmony with other faiths, and, to this end, published a tract which, even to this day, appears remarkable as a far-sighted production—‘The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness,’ consisting of extracts from the three Synoptic Gospels with a few excerpts from St. John’s.

I wish to dwell upon one of these saving truths which he culled and collected into the ‘Precepts of Jesus.’ I refer to the very touching, intensely human story that a certain woman was caught in the very act of sexual misconduct and was brought to Jesus by the

representatives of the old Judaic faith. 'This woman has been caught in the immoral act!' 'What then?' the Master asks. 'According to the law of Moses which we obey, this woman deserves to be stoned to death!' 'Is that so?' 'Yes.' 'Then, let him cast the first stone that has not sinned in his heart!' And it is said—how graphic and impressive a description of the whole situation!—Jesus looks down as if absorbed in his own thoughts; and after a while, he lifts his head and finds none but the solitary accused. He asks her, 'Where are thy accusers?' 'Rabbi, they have dropped off one after another. They dared not accuse me of this wrong!' 'Neither do I accuse thee. Go thy way and sin no more!' I hold that, in point of the profoundest sympathy with the throbbings of the human heart, there cannot be a more moving example of what may be called genuine, trustful love for the human soul. It is easy, very easy, to take the word 'love' upon the lip. But when it comes to be put to the test, how bankrupt we betray ourselves to be! Here is our noble Master who applies the crucial test to the conscience of man, when he says, 'Let

him cast the first stone who has not sinned in his heart!' As the Bible puts it in striking language, to covet is to steal; to hate is to kill; to cast an eye of lust is to commit adultery. That is the essence of spiritual morality—not what we profess but what we practise; and even here, as Carlyle says, the practice, not of the inferior criminality of abstaining from the wrong deed, but the superior morality of cultivating the right spirit. The former is possible to many; but not so the latter, which denotes the inflexible fidelity, the soul-deep affinity, of man to God. As the Iranian scripture ordains, the test is threefold: *manasni*, with mind; *govasni*, with speech; and *kunasni*, with action. With these tests thou shalt satisfy thy conscience. If the desire in thy mind, the speech on thy tongue and the deed of thy hand are alike of the right spirit, then alone thou art truly moral and really pious. As a certain preacher has observed, how amazing are the inconsistency and the hypocrisy that speak in heaven but live in hell! Here was Jesus, who drove home the truth, 'Art thou true unto the best in thee? Then alone thou

art fit to judge others!' In that very instructive address which we had the privilege of listening to yesterday, we noticed how Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi pointed out that we are so prompt to judge others and so slow to judge ourselves. There is a suggestive thought in which this human weakness has been disclosed. Every person is said to carry two baskets—one in the front and the other in the rear. In the front one are exposed the faults of others; and in the rear one are hidden away one's own faults. How unhesitatingly—nay, even ardently—we go about reflecting on the wrongs done by others, in the pharisaical spirit, 'Great God, we are thankful we are not like unto these people; we are better, we are purer.'! All the great masters have insisted: 'Before you judge others, judge yourself.' That is a genuine man who is his own accuser, his own juror and his own judge. If at that acute-witted tribunal one can acquit oneself, one is *dhanya*, blessed. Here we are told, 'Let him cast the first stone that has not sinned in the heart!' This, indeed, is the supreme rule of life for every true man: 'Before thou shalt point

out the little mote in the eye of thy neighbour, beware that thou hast not a beam in thine own eye.' If only we bore in mind this great warning, how charitable, how full of amenities, how reluctant to point the finger at others and how ready to welcome the admonition from others we should become!

The next point is this. What about him or her that is reported to have been caught redhanded? 'I, too, do not accuse; because, more than my accusation, there is seated in that heart of thine a mentor who shall lay bare to thee the real enormity of thine own evil-doing!' In the popular adage, 'పెరిగిన పాపం చెప్పితే పోతుంది' (The sin committed disappears when confessed), the intent is that I am on the half way to redemption, when I can bring myself to disclose the evil done by me. To begin to evince a dislike for the dark spots is to set the face towards the high stars. Hence the golden rule: 'I shall not accuse thee; rather, let thy own better self accuse thee.' And this is so, even because self-indictment is infinitely more difficult of evasion and also more efficacious for regeneration than

impeachment by any fellow-man from a superior seat. Mark, too, the one vital condition of forgiveness: 'Sin no more.' Once for all, let it be realised that in all moral and spiritual struggles, the real fight ought to be between principle and principle, never between person and person. Then, as principles are made to harmonise, the hitherto divergent becomes the convergent hereafter. If so, the only correct test is that which Jesus applies to the erring woman: 'Go thy way; and sin no more, not only in act but even in thought.' And there is no reprobate whom we should reject—even as God does not despair of any—as beyond the reach of Divine grace. Here there are three great truths to lay to heart deeply. Firstly, unto God, with His persevering goodness and His loving mercy, there is absolutely no lost creature, however atrociously evil. There is ever the dear one yet to be redeemed and restored to the Parental bosom. However low, fallen and abject, still the child of God, with all his iniquity, is dear and welcome unto God's sanctifying embrace. Secondly, as to 'punishment,' simply efface that word from the

dictionary of the spirit. God only purifies, renders clean, what has become sin-stained, and redeems what has been bartered away to vice. Punishment—by whom and of whom? By the father and of the child? Unthinkable! In God's family, there is no punishment but only purification, unless you hold that the goldsmith who purifies a piece of gold is therein also punishing that piece. All that in the harrowing hour of remorse we name punishment is really God's purifying process. We are being tempered in baths of tears to be made sound. In the Divine household, there is no outcast dismissed with 'Get thee away from My sight'; there is no disinherited prodigal; but all are held equally dear. 'Go thy way and sin no more' is the only charge—of course, a heavy charge. Aye, your regeneration is God's own concern. There is a Vaishnava teaching: 'My salvation? Why worry over it? It is my Maker's concern. He has ordained that I should be saved. On my side, my only business is to submit to the will of Him who is the Lord of salvation.' God is the God of salvation, not of perdition; of redemption, not of deser-

tion; of cure, not of curse. A great, good and loving God of grace is here, ever solicitous. Even the vilest of sinners, tainted with the foulest of sins, may yet say to himself, 'My God wants me; He has assumed the responsibility of saving me.' Thirdly, even in the most sin-tainted soul, there is reposed a germ of the holy spirit of God. Iniquity absolute, devoid of all touch of the Divine, is inconceivable. However fallen a person, however sunk in the quagmire of sin, never fancy that he is lost—irretrievably lost. No, not lost, because in him there is an imperishable seed of good which must grow and bear fruit in the fulness of God's time. In every bosom, however degenerate and iniquitous, there is a germ of the Divine; and God applies Himself to it, undeterred by the accumulation of all the dirt and filth, the taint and tarnish, of sin. With the insight of infinite goodness, He perceives the germ embedded within and brings to bear upon it the cleansing powers of grace; and there starts the process of salvation. Be he a sinner caught in the act of sin; yet probe into the depths of his being, and you will

discover, amidst the abasement of carnal desires, an element, an instinct, that is akin to the Divine. Enfolded in every bosom, there is a germ of divinity so fecund, so productive, that, through the grace of God, it must unfold into the full bloom of a regenerated spirit. Tennyson's Lancelot bitterly grieves over the bonds of sin that have so utterly discredited and defamed him; and he frantically cries out,

‘My God,

I pray Him, send a sudden Angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far
And fling me deep.’

Yet the poet concludes with—

‘So groaned Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.’

Francis Thompson puts a kindred idea thus. We say, ‘Judge, not as God would judge, but as man would—that is, not by the lofty, austere standard of the Divine but according to our own frail companions’ ‘standard of the erring flesh.’ But this is an utterly mistaken notion. Man’s judgment of man is

but the surface view. Divine wisdom, on the other hand, goes to the inmost core of the being and notes every iota of potential worth and merit, and the fullest credit is given for even a touch of goodness. Man judges in the gross: seventy *per cent* bad and thirty *per cent* good; and, therefore, deserving of condemnation. God, however, says, 'The seventy *per cent* is of the earth—transient, while the thirty *per cent* is of Heaven—permanent. Invested in the Bank of grace, the thirty *per cent* will soon exceed the seventy.' Let our prayer, therefore, be: 'Judge even as God would judge, not skin-deep but penetratingly; judge, not with the purblind eye, but with the probing heart.' Miss Cobbe asks, 'What is the Nile, as it is in the map before us?' A tiny, narrow streamlet here and a big, broad current there; but all passing before the eye piecemeal. Yet unto God, the whole length being taken in at a single gaze, the mighty flow of waters is one panorama of beauty and grandeur which man, the creature of time and space, can never adequately vision. So, from the dawn of time to the close of time, from the animal to the angel, the pilgrim-progress of

the soul is one endless procession of grace and benediction. Hence, the mandate of mercy unto the sinner, 'Go thy way and sin no more.' The lesson, then, is: God is the God of love and grace and holds every one, however lowly, dear in a manner and to a degree of which we have and can have no correct conception. He thus draws close to every heart, as the engaging, attracting, winning, enrapturing, God. Evermore, He is my God, near and dear, perceived and enjoyed by me; no longer an echo of the sages' utterance. Into the depths of my degradations, He comes. To fancy God as secluded in far-off regions, as seated on the lofty mountain-summit is easy enough. But the harder as also the deeper experience is to realise that God is here and near, inwoven into all my concerns—a lamp unto the feet and a light unto the eye—not merely the transcending God but the companioning God. Say not that God is the God of the ancestors alone or of only sages and saints. Why, every beat of the heart, every throb of the pulse bears immediate testimony to God as even my God and your God. Unto the faltering

He is the steadying God; unto the lowly, He is the companioning God; unto the struggling, He is the sustaining God; unto the erring, He is the redeeming God; unto the sinning, He is the saving God. He is my All and your All. Fight not shy of this immanence of God: but approach Him with the assurance—the freedom and the trust—of a child.

This, with all its rich implications, comprises Rajah Ram Mohan Roy's message to the world. And why and how is this a message to the world? Here I shall recall a line from the memorial verses composed on the demise of the Rajah in 1833 at Bristol. That great man—the morning-star of our modern day—closed his earthly career on the 27th September of that year; and as natural to the solemn event, there was grief among those who had seen and known, understood and admired him. That feeling expressed itself in various forms. One remarkable verse then composed declared the Rajah's noble message to be—'Nations, behold your God! Rejoice, rejoice!' It was an appeal not to any one section of mankind; but it

was a universal message delivered to all the nations. That God who had been veiled behind the apathies and antipathies of man was again to be visioned with the vividness of direct perception and immediate experience. With the authority of one who had himself communed with the Spirit of God, Ram Mohan proclaimed it to all his fellow-men: Behold your God, not self-veiled into the remote in time or space, but ever-present before and behind you, within and without you, besetting you all round and sustaining you through all the processes of life. Behold Him, with the vividness of direct perception, as the only Reality, the vital Substance of the whole creation, the bed-rock Basis of the entire universe, the primal Source of all that is, holding in eternal order and coherence the complete structure of the cosmos. God, then, is the ever-present God to be seen, felt, realised and enjoyed. Behold Him and rejoice. It is not the overpowering, over-awing God that by His transcendence outreaches, by His profundity baffles and by his infinitude overwhelms you, but the loving, winning God you are to rejoice in. And as

you thus rejoice, the only natural and legitimate way to evince your rejoicings, is to rejoice in one another. It has been put allegorically that, as the devotees danced in rapture around the Lord of their hearts, they rejoiced, too, in one another. So, as you rejoice in the Creator, you rejoice in the peoples created to inhabit the universe. When this reciprocity becomes ensured between soul and soul, between community and community, all feuds cease and all strifes are hushed into harmony by virtue of the worth and the beauty perceived in one another. In fact, only when we rejoice in others do we rejoice in ourselves. Then, as the nations rejoice in one another and you thereby and therein rejoice in yourselves, every movement of your person becomes a note in the music that keeps time with the symphony of the whole universe. As you thus rejoice, you feel assured that out of the joy of harmony the universe has come into being—not the propulsion of might, not the reflection of wisdom, but the emanation of joy. God, in His infinite joy, His inexhaustible *anandam*, has ushered forth creation as the off-spring of joy.

He is the God of joy ; and his creation is création in joy. Rejoice in one another, because in each soul there is a repository of that joy divine. And as linking nation and nation, the League of Nations of the present day is only a casual expression of international joy. Behind this august Institution, as its background, there must be the confraternity of the whole of humanity as the creation, in joy, of a God of joy. When this spiritual affinity is established, the nations must, and cannot but, form a league ; and the advancing ages will form an ever-growing symphony, the last note in complete accord with the first. And then nations, as components of an organic whole, will be sustained by the strength of one another. So shall wrangling cease and war itself be outlawed ; and so shall the entire creation ring with a hosanna unto Love. Hence he who has love in his bosom has his incomings and outgoings in God ; and he whose life is lived in love becomes the radiant mirror of the glory of Love. ' Nations, behold your God ! Rejoice, rejoice ! ' And on this account, Rajah Ram Mohan Roy was not merely the prophet of his

country and the light-bringer unto his time; but so long as peace is prized, harmony aspired after and the resultant joy held in dear esteem, his voice, with growing intensity and increasing authority, shall be reiterating the message, 'Nations, behold your God! Rejoice, rejoice.' May that message enter and dwell in the heart of each one of us; and the rule of life for every one be so to contribute to the joy of all that in universal brotherhood shall be the consummation of individual good! May the spirit of this evangel abide in the souls, work in the lives and predominate in the duties and pursuits of the whole human race.

Om! Harih Om!

PRAYER:
ITS UNIVERSALITY AND
ITS POTENCY.

(1924)

In his 'swan-song', Arthur—the sovereign-saint whose life pictures the holy war waged by soul against sense—exclaims:

"For what are men better than sheep or goats
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer?"

It is, indeed this *lifting up* of hands, with the lever-power of prayer, that marks man out from his fellow-creatures: that, in Martineau's felicitous phrase, separates man, 'not by mere gradation, but by a virtual infinitude, from other races here' and, in fact, carries him, 'beyond the classifications of species altogether'. If as Max Muller has observed, language — articulate speech — is our Rubicon which no animal can cross, it is incalculably truer that prayer — the 'converse' of the human heart with

its Maker and Mentor—is our pathway to that Realm of Realities into which no animal can trespass. Man speaks because he is 'noble in reason'; man prays because he is 'infinite in faculty.' Speech is man's reaction to the creation; prayer is man's response to the Creator. Man takes in the world of sense with his speaking capacity; man transcends that world with his 'praying' strength. Hence, through all the processes of the ages, through all the stages of his evolution, man has heard a call imperative from without and has felt an urge irrepressible from within to pray—to let his voice 'rise like a fountain night and day.' At all times and in all climes, under all conditions of existence and along the whole line of his activities, man has believed in, and cultivated the spirit of, prayer. Childhood with its innocence, youth with its hope, manhood with its dutifulness, age with its insight—all have uniformly prayed. Prayer has been the invariable language of the universal petition of weakness for strength, of want for relief, of struggle for endurance, of penitence for pardon, of ignorance for wisdom, of doubt for

assurance, of power for right-doing, of faith for grace. In one word, prayer has, everywhere and always, been the spontaneous expression of that 'reverence' which is the apex-virtue of man.

No doubt, objection has oftentimes been raised against this distinctively human habit of prayer: God rules, it is urged, by unalterable laws which no human importunity can change; God possesses an all-comprehensive knowledge which no human intimation can inform. The objection, however, misses the ultimate object of prayer; it fails to appreciate the one supreme result which prayer is calculated to further. That God governs by unalterable laws is granted on all hands. But man does not always realise, with equal vividness, the fact that God's laws can be unalterable—are, in other words, capable of uniform application—just for the reason that they are actuated by goodness and designed by foresight. An unalterable law that guarantees no benevolence and that emanates from no wisdom would, if the phrase be permitted, be a veritable "Jagan-nath car" propelled by blind fate—a

portentous thunderbolt hurled by furious whim. It might, further, be held as an impregnable position that no rule could endure, could hold good, from age to age, were it not attended with wisdom and goodness. Lacking wisdom, it would aberrate, self-confounded; lacking goodness, it would collapse, self-condemned. That creation is a unity in its organisation and a growth in its evolution, unmistakably points, however, to wisdom as the channel-bed and to goodness as the fountain-head of this world-current of life. The laws which govern this process are, therefore, the ways of a wise and benevolent Deity; and prayer denotes man's perpetual pledge that his intellect shall be taught to own and to copy that wisdom, his emotion shall be trained to receive and to transmit that benevolence, and his will shall be perfected by self-dedication to the one through self-surrender to the other. In fine, the fruit of prayer is the discovery of man as the 'image' of God. It is altogether foreign to its purpose either to doubt the wisdom, or to deflect the ways, of the Supreme One. As a very thoughtful writer suggests, the Divine,

like every wise human, Parent employs the very laws and methods of nature, profoundly wise and benevolent as they are, to grant the requests of the child. Every prayer granted is meant, and can tend, only to justify the ways, and to endear the spirit, of God to man.

It is, however, well that we clearly recognise how, like every other spiritual faculty, the spirit of prayer is subject to steady evolution—to an upward trend from one stage to another. According to a well-known formula, the ‘ascent’ of the human to the Divine Self is marked by five different stages—the silent ‘awareness’ of the creature, the humble duty of the servant, the faithful attachment of the friend, the tender affection of the child, the ecstatic union of the spouse. Conformable to the stage attained will be the immediate concern and the surface expression of the spiritual engagement named prayer. Hence, prayer may seem to be prompted by fear; then it may wear the guise of flattery; and again it may assume the voice of faith — of trust and resignation. But the inherent, redeeming virtue

of this God-gifted faculty gradually transmutes the incidents of form and expression, till fear is sublimated into awe, flattery is refined into praise, and faith is perfected into self-surrender. When this happy consummation is attained, the devotee disdains to propitiate, scorns to flatter and is discontent even with 'faith.' His sole purpose in life—the dearest desire of his heart—is to be "in tune with the Infinite." What constitutes the fundamental difference between man and the rest of creation? Objects commonly termed inanimate mechanically obey the laws of God; animals usually styled 'lower' instinctively conform to the laws of God; man finds his supreme prerogative in consciously accepting the laws of God—in adopting them knowingly, willingly and cheerfully. The moral sense in man can function only through man's voluntary affiliation, and his self-determined subordination, to the ways of God. The two theories of speculative thought regarding man's moral responsibility — summed up in the two words, pre-determination and free-will — may appreciate a practical reconciliation—a helpful *rapprochement*—through this

conception of prayer. The ways of God are certainly unalterable; yet may not free-will have been vested in us in order that, of our own free choice, we shall, in an ever-increasing measure, draw the inclinations of the finite into line with the purposes of the Infinite? "Our wills are ours to make them Thine!" Likewise, the spirit of prayer may discern a lofty significance—a 'far-off interest'—in the trials and ordeals of life. Is not a reassuring suggestion conveyed by the striking thought that trouble drives man to prayer and then prayer drives trouble out? Aye, is not the wisdom of the ages concentrated into the blessed experience of a God-possessed soul that God gives us the cross and then the cross gives us God? Prayer — genuine, absorbing prayer — marks the progress of the pilgrim-soul from the cross to the God-head.

There are three distinct (though not separate) elements comprised in the complete practice of prayer; and they form, as it were, the tripos of an adoring soul; namely, reveal Thy nature unto me; vouchsafe Thy

strength to follow the light revealed; and do Thy will—or rather, realise Thy spirit—in me.

(1) God undoubtedly knows all our wants. But prayer is the proof that we have come to realise—to know and to feel—our want of God. It is an avowal of our preparedness—the craving of our heart and soul, aye, the consuming hunger and thirst of the spirit—for ‘light, more light.’ “Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth”; and “in Thy wisdom make me wise.” This occasions, this leads to *revelation*.

(2) Next, there is the purposive desire—the aching appetite—to absorb and assimilate the in-flowing light. Thus alone is the consciousness vividly acquired that the light graciously vouchsafed is incalculably precious and has to be faithfully reflected and lovingly rendered back. “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” This stimulates, this makes for, *regeneration*.

(3) Last comes self-surrender. An existence separate from God is insufferably

oppressive. 'Do Thou, O God of Love, 'resume' me!' In this commingling of Spirit with Spirit—what I have been, 'may He *within* Himself make pure!'—the God in man is evoked; nay, the human is transfigured into the divine.

"Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all, for Thee."

This constitutes, this culminates in, *realisation*.

The story of Dronacharya and Ekalavya signifies how the adoring disciple acquired mastery in the art of archery even through soul-deep devotion to the image of the inspiring *Guru*. The image only symbolised the vitalising process whereby the essence of Dronacharya, embosomed in Ekalavya, grew and expanded through ardent devotion to the *spirit* of the Master. So also, even more so beyond words, all that is true and pure and holy is infused through the inspiration, and realised through the grace, of the Living God, as a result direct from, as a response evermore to, the worship of Him 'in spirit and in truth.' Therefore,

pray with trust, pray without ceasing, till the practice of prayer terminates in that rapt communion with the True, the Wise and the Blissful which leaves no residuum of the 'me'—the little self—save the ecstasy, the beatitude, of holy enjoyment. Thus will come true the glowing words of a spirited writer as regards 'the potency of Prayer, that it can 'turn flesh into spirit,' 'metamorphose nature into grace,' 'fetch earth up to Heaven.'

‘AS THOU ART, SO IS HARI.’*

(1930)

* * * *

Kabir has, in his own homely and penetrating manner, enunciated this great truth. Though, perhaps, several of you may not be able to follow the original, yet its mere form, to my understanding, is so telling and so attractive as to impress us even with the very sound of it. I shall first recite the original :

Harka kya puchat ho ?

Kya batavun Har kaaisa hye ?

Kya khunti-se bandhun bhynsa hye ?

Ya hat-men dedun pysa hye ?

Tu jaisa hye, Har vaisa hye.

Rendered freely into English, it reads —
“Is it about Hari that you enquire? How, in

* Extract from the opening speech at the Brahmo-pasana Mandir, Cocanada, as President of the Centenary Celebrations of the Brahma Samaj Mandir and Trust Deed of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy (25—1—30).

what manner, can I show you what Hari is like? Is it a buffalo that I might fasten to a peg and exhibit to your physical eye? Or is it a coin that I might straightway pass into your hand? As thou art, so is Hari." Now that I have given you the translation of it, you will, I presume, enjoy my repeating it again in the original.

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'As thou art, so is Hari'! This is, to many, a startling assertion. We are liable to think it almost blasphemous that a saint like Kabir should make man the very measure of God and that God should be asked to be apprehended in terms of man. However, though not always put in this blunt form, this is a vital truth clearly stated and repeatedly emphasised by several great teachers. Of course, later theology has put various strange and subtle interpretations upon the plain, straight forward words of Jesus. But unto us that are willing to receive the teachings of that great Master with the utmost reverence and yet with a correct understanding, there is the same lofty truth in the

declaration, 'He that hath seen the son hath seen the Father.' And in India there has been quite a succession of prophets and teachers who have proclaimed the very same truth: 'Wouldst thou see God in the vividness of true presentation, then behold Him in thyself.' Now, one most regrettable mistake that we generally make when this golden truth is commended to us, is to fancy that the teacher is venturing, presuming, to present God to us as the image of man. But the teacher's real intent is just the reverse; he desires to present man as the image of God. It is not that God is to be viewed as a reflection, a copy, of man; but that man is to be appraised as a reflection, a copy, of God. That greatest of Persian Sufi poets, Jalaluddin Rumi, says, 'Man, thou art a magic mirror in which the great Charmer (as the mystics love to name God) reflects His own beauty. If thou wouldst present that beauty in its captivating charms, then burnish this mirror.' Jami, the soul's twin-brother of Rumi, declares in identical terms, 'Thou art the glass in which His Face is reflected; in truth He is manifested but thou art hidden.' In other

words, if thou wouldst realise thy God as reflected in thyself, then make thyself godly. To the extent to which, and in the manner in which, it is granted to any one to reproduce in himself the Divine qualities, not in mere abstract theory, no, not even in occasional outburst of sentiment, but in the abiding and impressive presentation of the virtues developed and the character cultivated in oneself, to that extent and in that manner alone is God realised. As Ruskin observes, that 'God is Love' is a precept quite familiar; but God is Love, He is apprehended by thee as Love, He is unto thee real Love, only in proportion as thou hast developed in thee that supreme, divine quality called Love. 'The greatest argument for love is love', says Dryden. Therefore, the prime function of Religion is to present, to manifest, the true nature of God in the best and noblest growth of man. Of course, it is a commonplace reflection that, if you would understand all the powers and possibilities of any being, you must judge it by its highest embodiment. Would you realise what is called will-force? Then, it is not through

weaklings that succumb to the first attack of opposition and fall an easy prey to the first onslaught of temptation but through those that stand four-square to the assaulting storm of trial, temptation or bereavement, that you have to understand the potency of will-force. Would you appreciate the finest genius of a master-artist, be it in song or in colour? It is not to the rough sketch or to the 'prentice production but to the finished piece that you have to turn. Similarly, if God, the all-perfect God, is to be visualised, vividly felt and enjoyed, it is by the rebirth of the god-like in the human soul that this great revelation of God's glory can be accomplished. This is one of the three offices of Religion. It should first disclose the *mahima*, manifest the *majesty*, of God in the universe and next reveal the *sanctity* of God in the human soul and finally synthesise these two and thus unfold the *providence* of God in the processes of history. First as the mighty yet minute Architect of the universe, next as the secret yet shining Glory in the human soul and then as the incessant, tireless Ordainer of the destinies of nations

—in these three aspects has God to be brought home to us by Religion. These are three initially differentiated but ultimately unified self-manifestations of God, the realisation of which constitutes the triple *yoga* man has cultivated through the ages—what Keshub Chander Sen called the *Vedic* yoga in the universe without, the *Vedantic* yoga in the spirit within and the *Pauranic* yoga in the human race around.

My present purpose is to dwell upon the truth so beautifully declared to us by Kabir: Wouldst thou know God, then be godly. No other way is open to man for the realisation of God. Mystics, sufis, *rishis* of all times and climes have avowed that true knowing consists in becoming and being. You know an object only when and in so far as you become, imbibe the true nature of, that object. To stand apart and to turn the microscope of analysis and, as it were, map out the miniature of an object—that gives only the surface-view of the object. Penetrate with ‘second sight’ into the object itself, and you come to its vital core, its inner soul. This

is pre-eminently true of our understanding of the perfection of the Deity, so far as it is given to us to understand it. Only he who has passed through the triple *sadhana* of peering through the veil of God in Nature without, of pilgriming into the holy of holies of the Divine Spirit within and of spelling out the secret trend of human history, even that Divine purpose which runs through the ages—he alone can truly understand the All-embracing One. As Martineau, referring to this aspect of Religion, observes, would you come upon the truest and most glorious manifestation of God, then it is done, not by wanderings without, but by pilgrimings within. Therefore, on us is enjoined this great and, as we proceed, this blessed task of so submitting to the divine process of illumination and to the divine discipline of sanctification as to receive the holy light of heaven and raise the golden harvest of humanity. How great, how blessed, is the responsibility laid upon us! Read ever so much, nay, discuss and debate ever so much, ponder and reflect ever so much; all that is only a peep into the outer court of the

Temple. You reach the *Sanctum Sanctorum* only when you are blessed by God to receive His own divine essence into your innerbeing. Just as music is mere sound to him that has not the sense, the receptivity, for melting melodies, so all religion, on one theory, is but a bare logical subtlety unto him that has not come into direct touch with, and reproduced in his own life, the divine traits of wisdom, goodness, beauty and holiness. In this sense, it is to the extent to which you have, by God's grace, developed into the child of God that you are fitted to state from personal experience what God is like. So many illustrations of the negative side of this truth are furnished by what to us appear to be altogether ludicrous conceptions of the deity in earlier ages or even in less developed minds in our day. He who believes in might as the rule of right in the world believes only in a God of might. He who finds the destiny of life fulfilled in the enjoyment of pleasures, not necessarily carnal but secular and sensational, is content with a religion that purveys pleasure. Study and compare the methods of worship in various denomina-

tions, and you see how the mode of worship is an index to the 'thought of God.' Here, then, we have one more illustration of the truth of Kabir's dictum. If I might, consistently with solemnity, refer to one incident which is characteristic of those who make their religion after their own manner, I might mention how, about that time when the Boer War was raging and feelings were high-strung between the British and the Boers, a girl of British parentage asked 'Mamma, in which language does God speak?' and the ready answer came, 'Of course, in English.' The same tendency we notice in theological as in literary bias: this is sacred and that is profane; this is the chosen oracle for God's message and that is far from fit for Divine use! But he who realises God in His universality and His eternal self-donation unto all souls — he believes, as Keshub Chander Sen has said, that God speaks ever in the native vernacular of the heart. God is a loving God where the devotee has, after His God, grown into a great source of love himself. If a man, being struck, strikes not again but prays for the offender and thus

grows to be divine in forgiveness, it is because he has imbibed the spirit of the Supreme God, of whom it may be said, without any reflection on His majesty but with full reverence for His mercy, that, struck, he strikes not back again. How He receives into Himself, with an illimitable, inexhaustible capacity, all the complaining, all the vilification, all the rebelliousness of man! And as the mother discloses the maternal virtue in her, she also typifies the Motherhood of God. Likewise, as every other relation, human and unifying testifies to the operation of the Spirit of God in that direction, so the soul in which are centred the divine qualities of truth and wisdom, love and beneficence, beauty and bliss, alone reflects the image of God. How, when at last, there came to him this vivid, quickening and sanctifying experience of God's immediate self-revelation in him Maharshi Devendranath Tagore exclaimed, 'Hereafter, from my heart I shall shed light upon the world!' So long as the mind is narrow, shrunken and, if not selfish, at least so dwarfed in sentiment as to define justice

as rendering unto the friend his due and withholding from the enemy his due; so long as the heart's longings are fastened upon the immediate and profitable objects of life; so long as the soul is satisfied with the position, if not of conventional, at any rate of traditional, worship, so long God must remain on all too circumscribed and colourless being. When into the heart has been received the glowing light of Truth, the nectarine sweetness of love, the captivating charm of beauty and the heavenly aura of Holiness, then the soul mirrors forth the True God. As the photographer's plate, to the measure of its true sensitiveness, reproduces the original faithfully and impressively, so the soul is, as I have just said in Rumi's phrase, the magic mirror on which, according to its freedom from dust and twist, God is vividly reflected. God, as Love, is self-donative; God, as Beauty, is self-reflective; God, as Holiness, is self-propagative. And man at his best, constituting the sublimest instance of that Divine self-donation, self-reflection and self-propagation, must shine forth as the brightest mirror—aye, the noblest

Image—of his Maker.

Again, Rumi says, in another striking figure: the reed is cut from the stem and shaped into the flute; from the moment it is severed from the original stock, its one note tells of the anguish of separation; and in the result, what happens is that, bereft of the sweetness of communion with the parent plant, it proclaims, through its very moanings, how sweet Love is. Its lamentations are the best expositions of Love. God is that One Supreme Object (*Paravastu*) the quest of which is never fruitless. The struggles of that quest are the springs of strength; bitter failures in that quest are "stepping-stones" to sweet success. "On this road no traveller has lost his ways," is a Persian adage. And as the reed laments, it creates in others a yearning for that love; it transforms the tasteless stick into the sugarcane. What it seems to have lost in itself, it regains in others through that *sympathy*, that kinship of the spirit; which Love alone can evolve. Man, bereft of God by his own transgressions, tortured on the rack of remorse and passing through the

purgatory of penitence—even he thus proves a messenger of God; his sighs and tears foster and feed the germinal love in others. Says the poet Shelley, himself an acute sufferer in the great quest,

‘Most wretched men
Are cradled into poetry by wrong;
They learn in suffering what they teach in song.’

This spiritual suffering from the sense of bereavement, of banishment from God, though seemingly a fruitless aridity, is really the sod-breaking preparation for that fruitful faith which is both balm and cordial for the pang-smitten heart. Let us go a step further and say, without any blasphemy in it, that the tear of sorrow is the truest homage unto the God of grace. Shudder not, again when I add that, in a real sense, God is a long-suffering God, suffering the heart-ache of the guiltless parent for the prodigal child. Thus, he alone who suffers from the transgressions of his fellow-men presents the finest picture of God. Not by each of us suffering alone for his own vilations of virtue but by that indissoluble tie of brotherhood by

which the privations of one become the losses of all, do we become a God-possessed, God-illuminated humanity. A great critic has observed that the finest couplet in the English language descriptive of the ideal 'moral temper'—the model man—is the verse of the poet Pope,

‘Never elated, while one man is oppressed;
Never dejected, whilst another is blessed.’

Therein is the reproduction of Divine greatness and Divine goodness in the heart and life of man.

Next, in conclusion, I will recall one incident in our Maharshi's life. The *pandas* at Puri pounced upon him and proffered their mercenary ministrations. He was conducted into the temple, corridor after corridor; and eventually so teemful of worshippers was the inner apartment that he could see nothing beyond, when, 'This is Jagannath (the Lord of the universe)', cried out the *panda*. But, as the Maharshi tells us, he could not see 'Jagannath' there; all the same, the ardent, adoring congregation made vivid to him the

presence of the Formless Jagannath. And he continues: In this idol-shrine I have seen the Formless; here every one sees that which he desires; I have desired to see the Formless Jagannath, and I have been blessed with his *darsan*. Aye, in this vast universe, in this world-wide Puri, is enshrined the Formless Jagannath: and only to the degree to which we breathe in the sweet, sacred atmosphere of the universal temple do we get into living communion with the Formless Jagannath. It is only this worship, not in set phrase or with well-tuned music, but of hearts swelling with love and souls glowing with devotion, that will make true to us the golden precept of Kabir—"As thou art, so is Hari." May God, in His mercy, bring home its truth to each one of us in his or her life!

THE NEW PILGRIMAGE*

(1930)

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Sisters and Brothers,

We have had a sweet discourse upon an extremely refreshing subject. The Lecturer began with the very suggestive observation that it is a native instinct, a deep-rooted desire, of human nature to enrich the commonplace routine of life with the thoughts and sentiments that gather round some particular institution—be it a place or a person, an object or an incident—believed on more or less substantial grounds to bear a special mark, a distinct token, of the grace of God as it works in man. Hence the desire, the impulse, for pilgrimages is universal. But one of the very regrettable

* Extract from the Presidential Remarks after an address by Srimathi Nirvana Priya Ghosh, B. A , B. T., at the Brahmopasana Mandir, Cocanada.

results of what passes for a protestant phase in each faith is the disuse into which falls this pilgriming habit and custom. Protestantism in any form starts with the postulate that the ways and methods of the past were misleading and must be eschewed. One of the commonest indications of the protestant spirit is to be seen in the elimination of ancient landmarks, as, for example, in the abolition of monasteries in England and the dissolution, in all Protestant countries, of institutions long held to be proofs and testimonies of God's special presence. We need not hamper ourselves with the delimiting idea of God's presence in special places. It dilutes itself ultimately into the spirit of non-recognition of His presence at any place. Thus protestantism is only too prone to injure itself by neglect of the pilgriming instinct. True protestantism ought not to eliminate but to enlarge the institution of pilgrimage. The remedy lies not in abolishing but in extending the bounds of pilgrimage. Therefore, the new pilgrim's plan is, not to ignore sanctities existing through untold generations, but

to enrich them with sanctities not hitherto recognised. Just as in the ordinary requirements of life the wise course is to follow the principle, not of monopoly and exclusiveness, but of co-operation and reciprocity so that the wants of one are met by supplies from another, so in the spiritual world, as we go along the sacred path of pilgrimage, instead of narrowing and delimiting ourselves by confining our reverence to particular places and periods and persons, we should discipline our hearts into the acceptance, in profound reverence, of all the sanctities of other nations and races. It is not by pronouncing a certain circumscribed area alone as the one sacred scene of pilgrimage and tabooing all else as secular that we broaden the horizon of our souls but by going out, not necessarily with the physical feet but with reverent hearts, to all the hallowed spots and inspired souls of the world. Why, if you take up those small books published from time to time in the 'Wisdom of the East' series, you will find no end of startling instances of coincidence between faith and faith, of harmony between prophet and prophet. There is a volume en-

titled 'The Rhythm of Life,' written by a man from the West after a visit to China. In it he expounds the Doctrine of Tao. Read it from cover to cover; all you have to do is to substitute for Tao any other Divine name you like, and the rest will be found entirely applicable to your liberal faith. Another book sets forth the Philosophy of Jami, the great Sufi. As you read it, you cannot but wonder that it is so modern as if belonging to our own day. Again, that glorification of the Supreme Spirit in the Hymn of Cleanthes in Classical Greece which takes us back to three or four centuries before Christ—how it comes, indeed, with the freshness of this day's dawn! Why should we, then, be so uneconomical in the wealth of the spirit as to impoverish ourselves by keeping it all out of our range? The modern pilgrim says hoary institutions are hoary, not in the sense of having been once pronounced sacred in the traditional faith, but in the sense of being perennially and perpetually sacred. The catholicity of the Prophet of Islam is evidenced in this, that what the Moslems call the Kaaba and turn towards in their prayers five times

a day was really not started by Mahammad but had been the sacred place of Arabia even before. Only, after having cleansed the place of what all he believed to be its delimiting and demoralising features, he accepted and treated it as the vitalising, unifying centre of his dispensation. What, now, is the spirit in which one has to go forth on *haj*? Along the lines of the transcendental theology, the metaphysical aspect, of Islam, says one of the Sufis, go to Mecca by all means; but as you go stage after stage, go not as if removing old garments and putting on new ones; rather, leaving your carnal, immoral desires behind at every step, go through the baptism of a new-cleansed existence. When you come to the sacred well, feel as if you have thrown away stone after stone and are prepared to take in new cargo. All this requires *Sadhan*, discipline. The disciples of Sree Sankaracharya wanted to follow in his wake. They could do it in respect of a few physical acts. But when it came to supernatural feats, they only blinked. They had not passed through the necessary discipline.

One other essential point is this. When very young as a student, I was once passing along a road. I saw a lady haranguing to a number of other ladies upon the differences between our religion as Hindus and that of the Mahammadans. She observed how we grew our hair upon the head while they grew theirs upon the chin, how we washed our faces from top to bottom whereas they did it in the reverse fashion and, again, how we turned to the east for *Sooryanamaskaram* whilst they turned to the west for *namaz*. And so on, putting up argument on argument, she made good her thesis that Hinduism and Islam were diametrically opposed. Now, we laugh at that old dame. But do we not really satisfy and justify our-selves by similar arguments about our own conclusions or convictions, as we call them? Do not go by superficial differences. Rather go to the root of things. You will find that the same Holy Spirit that proved its own reality in the hearts and souls of the *rishis* was also working in the spirits of the good and wise, the true and righteous ones of all times and climes. Instead of depriving ourselves of an

age-long and world-wide heritage all too dear, we only gain in the riches of truth, love and righteousness by recognising the verified, indubitable existence of God's grace operative always and everywhere. That is the spirit of the new pilgrimage. Sisters and brothers, the eternal, universal God has not got one Benares but several; and our pilgrimage must be to all His *theerdhas*. Such is the indescribable love of God that He brings and focusses all those *theerdhas* into the heart and the hearth of each one of his children. Cultivate, therefore, not only the pilgrimage of going out to the sacred places of the earth but the more easy and more essential pilgrimage of entering into the inner shrine of the Self of your selves. He whom we proclaim as the *Manasamandira* does not come to us denuded of all company and stripped of all glory but surrounded by all the innumerable hosts of Heaven and compassed with all the inestimable wealth of truth and righteousness. In His own marvellous manner, He leads us from one prophet to another prophet, from one sage to another sage. The gospel delivered from the lips of a Buddha or a Zarathusthra

is still being delivered and shall yet be delivered in divers accents through ever so many messengers and harbingers. Only, we require the sacred spirit of Ramanuja, who would not conceal the *mantram* from anybody, be the risk what it might. In God's home, mind you, there are no separate segregations, no private reservations. The only right spirit is not '*my* God', not '*your* God', but '*our* God.' Then alone we realise the charm of '*my* God' and '*your* God.' Take the ordinary, patent instance of a mother. So long as I fight, '*It is my* mother, not *your* mother', I am fighting really against the mother herself and hurting the heart of that very mother. But once you and I learn together to say '*Our* mother' and look up together into her benignant face, we reap the blessing of her look and the benediction of her smile. Hence it is the plan of the new pilgrimage to draw in pilgrims in an increasing muster-roll to the shrine of the one Divine Mother. Have we not institutions like the Temple at Puri (Jagannath) where, at least, no caste differences are observed? How we stultify ourselves by simply localising that kind of

wholesome influence! Widen, widen the horizon of Puri; and you will find your hearts enlarging and your souls amplifying, even because it is the impulse of divinity through the whole of humanity. Thus it behoves us to make every place a sacred shrine unto all and every collection of water a baptismal fount for cleansing the souls of all.

Our sister has said it was granted to Rajah Rammohan Roy to see this wider vision and the same was enlarged in the days of Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen. We in the Brahma Samaj feel devoutly thankful for that mark of Divine grace. At the same time, we are persuaded that long before Rammohun there existed favoured, inspired souls unto whom the wider vision was disclosed in all its glory. It was said of Nanak that the Hindus called him a Hindu and the Mahammadans claimed him for a Mahammadan. Once they took exception to his lying down with his feet turned towards Mecca. And he said 'Brothers, turn my feet, if you can, in any direction where the temple of God is not.' That is everything. He went to Puri. One evening the *arathi*

was going on. 'Why don't you enter in?' 'Why, here I am in the presence of the universal *arathi* with the firmament as the plate, the sun and the stars as the flame and the breezes around as the everblowing fans. I am *not* outside the *arathi*; I am enjoying it here.' A Sufi was dancing in rapture. One who was wedded to orthodoxy sharply drew his attention to the call to prayer. 'Oh, I am already in prayer', was the answer given. Lord Jesus spoke of the New Jerusalem of a Universal Temple that God was to rear for Himself. Thus it is the same in all religions. And the new pilgrimage lies in the recognition of this vision that God has been granting to chosen spirits evermore and in the endeavour to make it more and more popular. Herein is the distinction between ancient and modern times. What was the special privilege of particular classes should be enlarged into an equal chance and invitation and responsibility unto all. What was or is possible for one must be possible for another, even as the same God indwells in one and all. Apply yourself to it, and you will realise its truth.

God is not a distant far-off God of the past alone, not the prerogative possession of any special caste or community, but your own present, personal God. Life in God through all occurrences is a pilgrimage which begins as soon as the eye sees light and never ends though you pass through the dark veil; for it is but a passage into larger light and sweeter symphony. Equate these terms, Brahma, Siva, Allah, Khuda, Tao, Jehova; and the whole content of the universe will be drawn under the same vinculum of Deity—no stranger as against a favourite, no outsider as against an inmate, no fallen man as against a saved adorer. All, all are in the home of God, because God is everywhere. Recognise, in this new pilgrimage, the Fatherhood of God, not in the accidental, but in the vital sense. Every minute of my being is springing out of Him; and hence my whole life is the offspring of His being. As we recognise the principle of the harmony of scriptures and the communion of saints, let us bring out into application and realise in daily routine the experience of the blessed ones of all ages—no mere dogma but experience. May He vouchsafe unto us the spirit to proceed along this path!

Om! Thathsath!

THEISTIC SYNTHESIS*

(1932)

In the issue of the Hibbert Journal for October 1931, there is an article by that thoughtful and learned Missionary worker, Rev. Dr. Nicol Macnicol, M. A., D. D., D. Litt., on *Religion in Contemporary India*. After discussing several questions, he arrives at the conclusion that, while every serious-minded person urges that in India's progress no peaceful and permanent social and political life is possible without the background of Religion and that, in India with her many cultures and faiths, Religion must remain a conspicuous factor in such synthesis as has to be desired and hoped for, he is unable to say how this synthesis can be practically achieved. He finds, according to his under-

* Address at Pithapuram Palace with the Yuvurajakumar in the chair during the Brahmoṣṭav celebrations of the Brahma Samaj (24—1—'32).

standing, some radical differences in the fundamental concepts of Religion among the different inhabitants of this country. While at one with those who hold that Religion everywhere must form the basis of national reconstruction and that in India, at all events, it is not possible to copy modern Moscow in her attitude towards Religion, Dr. Macnicol observes that there ought first to be synthesised these differences in respect of material, almost fundamental, conceptions in Religion. He concludes by saying that, if Hinduism and other religions are to be focussed into a common faith, there should be two great changes in the Hindu conception of God and the soul. *Jeeva* cannot be *Siva*. Man and God must be accepted and treated as distinct personalities. And the old classic saying, *Aham Brahmasmi*, must be abrogated. Again, the doctrine that the phenomenal world we see is all illusion must be superseded by the declaration that life, as we see it, has a real value. The writer thinks it is not possible for Hinduism to modify itself in these two concepts and yet remain Hinduism.

I am not here to controvert what the learned writer has said. In the history of the Brahma Samaj, we have all along endeavoured to expound the view that the conception of *jeeva* as *Siva* is not incompatible with the other conception that the *Jeeva* is a personality and that *Siva* is also a personality and these two personalities do not and need not stand apart as isolated individualities. Right on from the days of Rajah Rammohun Roy and especially in the teachings of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore and his successors, notably in the writings of Pandit Sitanath Tattwabhusan, we have maintained that God and man, the Deity and the devotee, are not identically but essentially one—the same, not in the sense of being co-extensive and conterminous, but in that of being complementary. In the very structure of thought there are these two factors. God is unthinkable except as the self-revealing Creator; and man is incomprehensible save as the transparent handiwork of the Creator. Just as the sun is inconceivable, devoid of light, and colour is inconceivable apart from the seeing eye, even so God and man are inconceivable except

in relation to each other. As a certain writer has said, God is not prior to man as his predecessor; but He is conceptually prior, that is, as cause to effect, not temporally prior, that is, in time. If we take hold of this fundamental difference between conceptual and temporal priority and succession, we see how these cannot go together. God and man are essentially one. Yet God and man stand as supplements to each other. Hence, when we come to *Aham Brahmasmi*, it is not the phenomenal *aham* that says it. For, what right has this little mote of the phenomenal 'I' to say, 'I am God'? The proper formula is, as we know, *Aham Brahmasmi* and not *Brahmahamasmi*. That which is the Core and Being of my life and which, being indestructible, survives the phenomenal and outlives the temporal—that is the Divine Essence in me. Therefore, I am not different in essence; yet I am different in logical necessity from the supreme Soul, the Soul of my soul. I should not be able at all to think of and think to God, if God and I did not stand apart in conception and also, *per contra*, if there

were no oneness between God and me. Thus, conceptually there is difference, but essentially there is none, between *Jeeva* and *Siva*. If we grasp this principle, there is little ground for the fear that no synthesis is possible between monism and dualism.

Then, there are these two aspects of the relation between God and man. One is the aspect of the Transcendence of God out-soaring and reaching beyond all human concrete understanding. And the other is, side by side, the conception of the Immanence of God pervading and interpenetrating the self and the whole of the not-self. But these are not such rigidly air-tight compartments, one apart from the other, that you can say that, if you are for the God of Transcendence, you are cut off from the God of Immanence and *vice versa*. If I may say so with a due sense of caution and limitation, the God of Transcendence and the God of Immanence are, so to speak, each growing as the other decreases with the process of time. As we grow in the conception of the God of Immanence whose spirit is inwoven

through the whole complex of creation so as to comprise the far-off nebula and the near flower, the God of Transcendence also comes closer and closer to us in life and experience. For, while He baffles the imagination that would grasp Him, He reports Himself to the heart that loves Him. It is like a huge reservoir out of which refreshing showers jet forth first as ripples and swell on next as rivers to flow along into the sea. Thus these two are complementary aspects, each interpreting itself as complementary to the other. When we accept them as the two hemispheres of one round of faith, we see no difficulty in synthesising the far-off, eternal Brahman with the dear and near, ever-available, ever our own Parameswara. The God of the *bhakta* is in the heart; but it is not that He is not outside the heart as well. The light of the sun is in the dew-drop; but it is outside also. The breath of the mother is in the lullaby; but it is not exhausted in the lullaby. The sweet smile of the friend is in the greeting of his love; but it does not end with it. Thus, the God of Transcendence is the God of Immanence,

exhausting Himself yet remaining ever inexhaustible in and through creation. In fact, He would not be inexhaustible unless exhausting Himself. Just as, unless it is engaged in spending itself, it cannot be claimed of any energy that it is a pond that can never be exhausted, so the God of Transcendence suffers no privation as the God of Immanence. If we hold, then, that the God of contemplation is also the God of devotion, we come to perceive that the God of the rishi's vision is also the God of my child-lisp; and they are not mutually irreconcilable. The God of transcendence is for our contemplation and communion; and the God of Immanence is for our love and devotion. Man grows on both sides—the sides of reflection and of devotion. And thus he comes to realise the transcendental and the immanental nature of God, as he grows on one side and on the other. In our *aradhana mantram*, there is the direct recognition of these two aspects of the Transcendent and the Manifest experienced without and enshrined within. As these are recognised as forming but one integral idea, the world impresses itself as both real and

phenomenal—real in the sense of the self realisation of God and phenomenal in that of entire dependence on the will of God.

Therefore, our aim in these great times through which India is passing must be to see how we can so interpret faith and experience that each one shall be able to make a contribution to the harmony, not of creeds, but of Worship and of its fruit, namely, Work. Then we shall be able to worship, if not in the same temple, at least in the same spirit, receiving more and more of His holiness and making it the inspiration and sanction for all work. Worship without Work is barren. Work without Worship is wasting. Worship with Work is perennially benevolent. Work with worship is capable of perpetual self-invigoration. Recognise the twin-relation between God and man—man contemplating God in *dhyana* and worshipping Him in *bhakti*. And then, God becomes visioned in worship and reproduced through Work.

Thus it is possible to harmonise and synthesise the conceptions which stand apart

as separative factors in the outlook of Dr. Macnicol. And thus we shall be able to hail those of seemingly other faiths than our own as only another section of the confraternity of souls. In *Nathan the Wise*, the Jew and the Christian grow into friendship. Says the Christian "Nathan, you are a Christian; none better". Replies the Jew, "Nay, the Jew in you has told you I am a Christian". Thus the Christian has to become one with the Jew to understand the Jew, and the Jew with the Christian to understand the Christian. And this is true allround. There is a story in Rumi. Four travellers—an Arab, a Persian, a Turk, and a Greek — are travelling together in a party. All feel the need of a refreshing repast. The first says, 'I want *anab*'; the second, I want *angur*'; the third, '*anjeer*'; and the fourth, '*staphule*.' As they are thus engaged in wrangling over the name, they see a load being carried on the back of a donkey. Each one, glancing at the contents, wistfully exclaims, '*That* is the fruit I want!' They did not differ in the concept but only over the name. Thus to understand and realise

the spirit behind the forms is to make it possible for different faiths to come together. Be it discerned that the varying concepts, after all, are only distinguishing characteristics and not differentiating factors. The Hindu, as he utters 'God', will understand Him as the sublime ideal of *Brahman*; and the Christian, for his part, as the moving inspiration for all that is benevolent. A recent translator of the Koran said, "'Allah' cannot be translated into English;" and, therefore, he retained 'Allah' throughout without substituting the familiar term, 'God', for it. These are aspects, not attributes, which impress themselves preeminently in divers ways on different spirits. Our study must be, not to make stumbling-blocks of them, but to realise the different aspects in the harmony of the one only Being and to grow into the sanctifying conception of the God of sublime thought, of inexhaustible love, of enrapturing beauty and of awe-inspiring holiness. None of the concepts can be dispensed with. But all together will bring in salvation, when the soul becomes the mirror of the Divine Being and, as a Sufi has said,

‘Thou’ and ‘I’ are seated in the garden, holding converse which Thou and I alone can understand. After all, the one thing needful is, not theoretical knowledge, but reproduction in life through mutual understanding and reciprocal appreciation; the soul of devotion, not the garb of faith. God grant it thus to every one of us!

CULTURE AND DUTY*

(1923)

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Life can perpetuate itself only through renunciation ; lasting good is achieved solely through ceaseless self-surrender, * I should make a fervent appeal to you, with all the earnestness of a sincere well-wisher, to cleanse your minds of even the slightest taint of one misleading and injurious notion. I refer to the not uncommon notion that there exists a real antithesis, an inherent conflict, between privileges and obligations, between rights and duties. Unlike certain other pairs of words—such, for example, as light and darkness, good and evil—which name irreconcilable and, therefore, mutually extinguishing antagonisms, the twin words we are now

* Extract from the Convocation Address, University of Madras.

considering denote not divergences but parallels, not contraries but complements. Rights and duties are inseparable concomitants, inalienable allies. It would be a fatal mistake to think of rights as the bribe for duties or of duties as the penalty for rights. Rights and duties are two aspects of one concept, two directions of one energy, two results of one function. They form the inlet and the outlet of one fountain of life — the inlet of power and the outlet of service. Rights without duties would be an idle boast; duties without rights, a surly growl. Rights and duties are welded into the undivided serene strength of self-realisation through self-reliance and self-expansion. Is it right or is it duty that prompts the stream to flow, the seed to grow, the bird to sing, the heart to beat? Withhold from the heart the right to pulsate, it is numbed; withdraw from the heart the duty to purvey, it is clogged. Nor is it irrelevant that we ponder over this fact for a moment. Our *Almamater* prescribes to us Culture as the supreme end of our being; and the distinguishing characteristic of Culture is the equipoise of Truth, which resists

what the poet calls the 'falsehood of extremes'. The goal of Culture is that emancipation from the bondage of self-interest whereby every right is instinctively transformed into a duty, as in unimpaired physical life food is automatically transmuted into energy. Let rights be received as a trust and duties be accepted as a call. Then their connascent relationship in man's moral life will become manifest. Then it will be perceived that even by a divine ordinance wide-spread respect waits on unflinching self-control, and liberal privileges are invariably yoked with exacting obligations. Verily, unto whom much is given, of him much shall be required.

Thus we are brought back to the thought that for being a liberal 'pensioner on the past', every educated person must be 'indentured' as a servant of the future. This, too, is an illustration of industry claiming 'an interest in its own fruits. Our position places each one of us under a triple obligation—the obligation of ceaseless self-development, the obligation of disinterested service to humanity, the obligation of

reverent response to 'the Eternal Power, not ourselves, by which all things fulfil the law of their being.' These are the intellectual, moral and spiritual obligations of Culture. Genuine Culture is thus a composite of three elements—a beam commingling three rays, a strength woven of three stands. Will you be good enough to bear with me while I attempt a very short study of this very great subject?

Culture has been designated 'the true philosopher's stone.' The phrase is happy as an appreciation of the sublime results of self-cultivation. The actual process, however, is one of development, and not of transformation. According to Novalis, Culture aims at giving man 'a perfect knowledge and mastery of his own self', by rendering the human consciousness 'its own light and its own mirror'. In other words, the object of Culture is to fit man for his noblest achievement—namely, self-realisation. In the illuminating language of the Seer of *Santiniketan*, 'every child comes with the message that God is not discouraged of man'. Culture is the witness to this Divine Hope.

in man, in that it affirms his high destiny to enlarge towards a glorious consummation. Culture is the pilgrimage of wonder to the shrine of wisdom. The basal assumption of Culture is that the human bosom is a mine of mysterious powers. The one great end of true education is to put man in conscious possession of these powers. The first among these is perception—the capacity to see with an investigating mind. Every conscious act of man is an exercise of this power of perception—the dwelling of the mind on the objects and happenings of life. Education has to steady this power by discipline and strengthen it by suggestion—that is, to develop perception into reflection, through concentration and comparison. Man thus becomes a being ‘of the ruminating kind’; the essence of his existence as man is to choose, to ponder and to realise. And in order effectively to exercise this ruminating capacity, man has to limit himself, even as a stream limits itself to its banks. This is ‘concentration’ and ‘devotion’ — the first illustration of ‘renunciation’. As a consequence, the human mind establishes direct

contact with the realities of life. Its fruit is clear thinking, penetrating insight, balanced judgment, and, therefore, sure ground under the foot and an open view before the eye. Man is thus enabled to stand erect and to look ahead — to think clear and to see straight. Thereby he enlarges the sphere of his interest and the field of his influence. Like a widening river, he receives affluents from all sides into himself and expands. This process of self-expansion inevitably sheds the old shell of narrow self-interest. The self is drawn out of its little cell into the broad light. The head and the heart are alike illumined. Aims and considerations with a circuit ampler than individual life become the decisive factors of plan and action. The thinking man matures into the considerate man. Altruism is engendered. Knowledge, *vidya*, is widened and deepened into wisdom — that X-ray of the spirit which pierces through forms and appearances to the reality of existence. This is *vireka* — the search-light of the soul turned on the face of the world. Dark recesses are radiated; new avenues of thought are opened out; new

springs of pure happiness are discovered. Wisdom is sublimated into illumination, *vignana*, till each single object shines as a 'theophany' — a suggestive sample of the one Eternal Idea. My meaning I may seek to elucidate with a humorous but instructive example borrowed from a well-known British journal. There is the familiar primrose. We pity the Peter Bells of the unthinking world to whom the primrose is nothing more than a yellow primrose. Out of their ignorance we have emerged into scientific knowledge: we have discovered the primrose to be a dicotyledon, and we have classified it as a rhododendron. Indeed, we have proved our practical sagacity by adopting it as the badge of a political party in the Primrose League. Nevertheless, have we been initiated into the secret of it? Why does the inspired bard name it the 'rathe primrose'? Can it be for the reason that it is the first smile of the incoming year—the messenger of resuscitated life — the bearer of the 'good tidings' that in nature there is no death but that 'every winter changes to spring'? Similar is the light which Culture, the Science of the

Truth, casts on all the experiences of life. It is man's glory to be, as the Arabic phrase has it, *Ashraful-Makhlukhat*—the exalted one of creation, because of his inborn power to 'con' the lessons of this occult science. The cultured man is thus a person endowed with a trained and developed capacity to appreciate aright the values of events and entities in relation to the whole round of existence. He possesses what Wordsworth and, after him, Newman call 'the philosophic mind.'

The moral and social value of the man of Culture, as the efflorescence of passionless sacrifice—*viraga*, cannot but be rare. With stores of knowledge which he is to be ever ready to augment through participation with others, he is an abundant source of enlightenment. With pure motive, high moral purpose and a strong sense of duty, he is an inspiring model character. With catholic spirit, courteous bearing, humane impulses and benevolent designs, he is a 'heaven-born harmoniser.' With clear thought, wide outlook, balanced judgment and well-directed energy, he is a powerful organiser. Braced

by the vitalising conviction that 'the highest is also the most real'; refined by the chastening influences of that true humility, *vinaya*, which, like 'the fruit-laden bough,' 'rests its head upon the ground'; and illumined by the savant's truth—'the laws of nature are the thoughts of God,' by the sage's wisdom—'the shoe-black is Infinite,' by the Seer's evangel—'among the *Daityas* I am Prahlada,' he is (in Lord Haldane's noble phrase) a brother of the 'Priesthood of Humanity'.

Stated in my inadequate language, such are the content, the aim and the worth of that Culture which the University assigns to you as the supreme concern of life. It is an 'excelsior' ascent of ever-towering heights. With expanding horizons and multiplying marvels, the prospect is glorious. The enterprise is heroic in purpose and fruitful in results. It is a path adorned with the footprints of the wisest and noblest of all ages. No traveller along this track, as a Persian poet assures us, has ever missed his way. Security and success are guaranteed of Heaven.

Stout of heart and firm of foot, keep, then, to this path. The warmest benedictions of your *Alma mater* go with you.

Before conclusion, a word of special welcome is due to the Bachelors of Agricultural Science—the pioneers, as we trust, of a steadily increasing *corps* of trained and willing workers in a field of vast possibilities. A great world-classic widely honoured in South India, defines the cultivators as ‘the pivot of the world’; and upon the intelligence and the industry of the recipients of the new Degree will largely depend the sustaining power of that pivot. This Faculty, perhaps, more than any other, demands that devotion to duty which accepts hard labour as a privilege. It will be your good fortune ‘to scatter plenty o’er a smiling land.’ May yours be the joy of benevolent duties zealously discharged! — The Lady Graduates are entitled to the warmest felicitations of all friends of India. If men-graduates prove India’s cultural power, their sisters in distinction represent India’s cultural glory, ‘a light to young or old.’ A hallowed sentiment of

this land demands that the mother shall be venerated as the first—the earliest and dearest—object of worshipful esteem. To you who are the expression of ‘the mother’, I accord, not only the respect due to grace, but also the reverence due to sanctity. In you and the other members of the sisterhood is vested the true greatness of the nation. May you achieve your heaven-appointed mission!

To Graduates of the Year in all the Faculties I would, in conclusion, address one word with all the solemnity of the farewell moment. It is not a word new to you; nor is it a word you will be suffered to forget. It is a word associated in the human mind with mingled feelings of awe, sadness and thankfulness—even the regnant word, *Duty*. The longer one lives and strives to be true to the purer promptings of one’s nature, the more vividly is brought home to one’s consciousness the sovereignty of this mighty word over human life. It is, therefore, incumbent on the outgoing to offer to the incoming generation, even as a memento of mutual good-will, some vivid though succinct

account of one's deep-impressed experiences relating to this all-compelling idea.—On the subject of Duty it is not possible that I can say anything that is new. But the reiteration of a world-old ideal is a daily task, like the daily reappearance of the Sun. The precept, 'whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might', signifies that a dedicated life alone can be a useful life. The Sacred Book of Human Existence opens with the dedication—'*To Duty*'. In the estimates of Duty, there is no distinction of high and humble. The day's duty notes the fulfilment of the day's worship. The privilege of performing Duty is 'the only absolute Right' of man.—Of the several characteristics of Duty, reference will here be made to two. The eye of Duty is ever upon man. It is 'the Hound of Heaven' watching over him through all the windings of life. No moment, no incident, is too trivial for the purview of Duty. The final judgment on Life is the verdict of Duty. Again, marvellous is the change of aspect in which Duty successively presents itself. It is usual to picture Duty as 'stern'; and severely stern it undoubtedly

is, as it enforces fidelity. But before long. experience discovers stern duty to be stimulating purpose. Through discipline comes development. And as development expands and enriches life, duty is ultimately hailed as delight. Discipline, Development, Delight—these mark the stages in the transformation of sternness into sweetness. Duty may at first be struck out, 'as the waters out of the rock'; but, in the end, Duty oozes 'as honey from the comb.' With this grace of sublimating labour into pleasure, Duty endears itself to life. Indeed, in the crowning accomplishment of man—self-realisation, life is duty, duty is life. The paramount duty enjoined by Culture is to realise the soul and surrender it to service.

SOCIAL PURITY*

(1901)

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Providence reveals its wisdom and manifests its love in the mysterious harmonies pre-arranged between objects seemingly unrelated or opposed. This divine ordering of things is strikingly illustrated in the mysterious "fellow-feeling" created and sustained between the strong and the weak, the vigorous and the tender, the restless and the serene, the longing and the responding. The depths of those profound relations between friend and friend, parent and child, pupil and preceptor, husband and wife, what plummet of intellectual calculations can sound? They are far-reaching as Infinity, holy as Heaven. This fact makes it essential to the very existence of a nation that these

* Extract from an Article on Social Purity and the Anti-Nautch Movement.

sacred weldings of soul to soul should never be suffered to be loosened by lust or tinkered with baseness. Apart from all "local conditions," the intimate inter-dependence of the sexes is recognised always and everywhere. They are meant by an eternal purpose to be each other's "help-mates" in a holy task—faithful co-partners in one "present paradise," joint-trustees of the generations to come. The profound responsibilities of parenthood, the devout self-surrenders of wedlock, the simple trusts of childhood, demand that the inviolable sanctities of marriage shall be kept scrupulously pure. "If man is the head of woman, woman is the heart of man"; and out of the heart are the issues of life. That character is the back-bone of a nation is almost a truism; but character has been compared to a bucket, and impurity to a leak at its bottom. "My strength," says Sir Galahad, "is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure." It argues a noble soul that cannot wrong a woman. A wag chafed Dryden at the utter spiritlessness of one of his heroes who could be alone with a beautiful woman and snatch no pleasure.

“Yes,” was the prompt and just reply, “you would have done otherwise, but you are no hero”! Gladstone has observed that “conjugal relation includes in itself all other loves ;” and the Mahabharata defines the wife as “the friend in solitude, the father in duty, the mother in distress and the refuge in wilderness.” Manu demands of him that would be a father—a noble image of the great Creator — to be wholly satisfied with her he has taken unto wife, and guarantees good fortune to the house where the husband is content with the wife and the wife with the husband. The Christian teacher exhorts him that would acquire a soul’s companion to give up his all for her sake. This comprehensive nature of the conjugal relation necessitates a corresponding rigidity in excluding everything partial or temporary, carnal or half-hearted, in the holy alliance of two hearts—in what has been happily termed “the harvest of a hundred years.” In fine, the delights of the home spring from the purity of the conjugal relation, and the strength of a nation depends on the happiness of its homes. He

has no country who has no home; and he has no home who does not rejoice in it as the sanctum of chasity and the shrine of love. The plea for social purity is thus,

A NATIONAL PROBLEM.

If progressive communities are, according to a high authority, distinguished by their readiness to harmonise legislation with growing public ideals, it is no less true of a healthy society that its declared intentions constantly adjust themselves to what is best-purest and noblest — in individual aspiration and experience. Laws, to be beneficial, should consult the view of the cultured; public opinion, to be honoured, should echo the voice of the oracles within. In the ultimate resort, the human heart — strong because pure, happy because temperate, attractive because self-denying — is the spring of all law or custom approved of man; and the essence of righteousness is in the freedom and the directness of personal conviction. Thus viewed, social purity challenges recognition as one of those prime principles which,

throned in the hearts of the "chosen ones," invariably raise the tone of society and elevate the standard of legislation. The position of woman in the home as the feeder of passion or the first preceptress of posterity, as the neglected drudge at the hearth or the unrivalled queen of the heart, either dooms a society to the suicide of self-exhausting vice or blesses it with increasing strength and stability. National vigilance, therefore, is nowhere else more imperatively required than in demanding thorough honesty, whole-hearted sincerity, perfect gentlemanliness, in that attachment of soul to soul which, when genuine, makes man an apprentice to Heaven, but, when spurious, earns for him the prerogative of the brute. Social purity thus acquires an honoured place in that constellation of sublime virtues without whose guidance the horoscope of a nation's greatness can never be cast. "Believe me," says an authority on this subject, "the maintenance of purity in the relations of the sexes is vital to national greatness and prosperity. For in the relations of husband to wife, parent to child, through long gradations of mutual tenderness and

support, each is bound to each, and all with golden chains about the feet of God. Break once these golden links of loving help and service, and all the strong bonds of civilised society will be weakened and loosed."

Nor is our society without several dark features that compel earnest attention in this direction. The land where popular belief enhances the value of paradise with the unfading charms of celestial nymphs and offers their favours as the reward (be it only as a second choice) for the highest of religious rites: the country where the current faith often formulates itself into a most subtle or seductive class of amorous poetry, which piety does not scruple to sing and modesty does not blush to hear; the empire whose armed defenders are provided in "regimental bazars" with markets covert for the offer of winsome flesh to licensed lust, and whose landed aristocracy often own a vulgar herd of nondescript men and women; the society infected with customs that lend the dignity of a caste to the basest of professions, or work upon the ignorance of

devotion to gratify sacerdotal sensuality; the community that places no legal limits upon a man's marrying capacity, but is not unwilling to visit with the persecution of law the woman who will not yield her person where her heart is not; the nation that hurries millions through a married life they are not equal to, and thrusts on millions of others a celibacy they dare not honourably set aside—India and the Indian nation cannot, for their very name and existence in the honoured circle of the civilised, afford to omit this question from a comprehensive programme of social reform and progress. In root-principle, it is of the same stock as temperance; in main argument, it is kindred to the great problems relating to the position and function of women in home and society; in its direct aims, it touches closely the large questions of the right use of religious endowments, the great responsibilities of leaders and the proper training of the young; in its ultimate results, it has a distinct bearing upon what foreign travel is meant to achieve or the elevation of the lower classes is expected to accomplish.

WHAT IS SOCIAL PURITY?

Man is the crown of creation even from the matchless complexity (with the immense possibilities) of his nature. There is, no doubt, a charm in simplicity, just as there is music in a monochord. But that harmony in which, according to the poet, this universal frame began and to which it has been growing, has its soul in well—ordered complexity. We are told, in the name of evolution, that the human embryo races through a range of diversified growth which in prehuman periods took ages to accomplish; and it needs no great stretch of imagination to see that the body, which is the focussed result of a hundred scattered processes of development, enshrines a being that commands a myriad avenues to mental and moral progress. This distinguishing capacity of man makes sound character a highly complex instrument, capable of producing angelic symphony but easily liable to get out of tune. The sole remedy lies in that serenity which presupposes equal growth on all sides, that purity which points the way to perfection,

that cleanliness of heart which is next to godliness of soul. Purity is to character what symmetry is to beauty — not an accident of adornment, but an essential of structure. It denotes that apt assortment of man's desires and appetites, in deference to his special powers and faculties of thought and speech, emotion and arts, will and work, which, by subordinating the physical to the intellectual, postponing the immediate to the ultimate, and surrendering the pleasing for the good, combines in man the sacred functions of the heir of ages past and the architect of centuries to come. It consists in that uniformity of development—that moving forward of the whole man, to which alone is awarded the maximum of good. It is that conservation of vital energy which come of a wise correlation of vital forces. It is that discipline of the heart under which man's desires and powers are told off to their respective tasks and through their conjoint watch and work win the great victories of life. In fine, it is that attuning of the soul to the process of nature as the chosen purposes of God, which ought to make every man what only

an occasional sage now is — the interpreter of life in the terms of eternity and the beautifier of earth as the corridor of Heaven. Applied to social life, purity is complete submission, whole-hearted homage, soul-deep obeisance, to what the sublimest English poet has named “the sun-clad power of chastity.” It is a call to the spouse to rejoice in the spouse, and a command to the parent to be pure amidst pleasure. It is a recognition of the stern truth that the righteousness which exalteth a nation has its secret strength in ‘a well-governed and wise appetite,’ regulated by the ‘holy dictate of spare temperance.’ It is a caution to the community that ‘to hastening ills a prey’ is the land where the heat of passion is preferred to the warmth of love, and the ‘prompture of blood’ is followed as the law of life. It holds (with Manu) that culpable attention to another’ consort is the surest course to curtail one’s length of days; and it condemns (with Shakespeare) as comrades in iniquity the rake and the murderer — “the saucy sweetness that coins heaven’s image on stamps that are forbid” and the reckless villainy that “falsely takes away a

life true made." It declares that the happiness of marriage shall be earned only with the obligations of marriage, and the blessings of family life shall be the prize only of those who keep its irrevocable pledge. It declares human existence too sacred to be cradled in lust; it proclaims the marriage bond too strong to be dissolved by freaks of taste, defects of law, or even the transition of death. It honours holy wedlock as an ordinance of the Most High and, hence, insists on the untranihed sanctity (to adopt F. Harrison's happy language), from even "one passing shadow of suspicion," of "the inviolable institution whereon the happiness of all depends." It finally warns the creature that "hooks its right and wrong to the appetite" to beware and be not deluded, that "neither the sensual nor the drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."

A very thoughtful and charming writer has pointed out that the benevolent nature of the government of this world is strikingly evinced in the boundless bounty with which gratification is added to relief, pleasure is

attached to duty, and enjoyment is infused into necessity. Thus, while light and sound might have sufficed for ordinary life, wisdom and love mellow the one into music and the other into rainbow. Hunger might be met with food, but a relish is placed in the palate; and touch is endowed with not only the sensitiveness of a thermometer but also the living sympathies of a flower. Life is thus everywhere waited on by pleasure; but it constitutes all the difference between the animal and the man how pleasure is used. To pursue pleasure as the purpose of life is the animal; to subdue pleasure to the purpose of life is the man. That follows the lead of instinct, this guides instinct with reason. Thus the animal is the creature of the day; but man is the pilgrim of eternity. This distinguishing prerogative makes, in man's case, pleasure the hand-maid to progress—not an alien to be rejected, but a servant to be managed; not a disease to be rooted out, but an impulse to be regulated. "Temperance" — wise moderation in the legitimate, cheerful abstinence from the forbidden — is, accordingly, the only law

befitting man; and purity is temperance in that supreme relation of the sexes which, as ordering the joys of home, prescribing the ideals of society and linking generation to generation, sways the destinies of our race.* Thus social purity is the control of our appetites, by our higher faculties as a course of life the most favourable to complete growth. "There is," says a vigorous writer on this subject, "a dignity conferred upon us — bringing men near to the high and solemn relationship of the Creator" — in our possession of the power of reproduction. With this honor is reposed the responsibility on every man to be pure and worthy in life and sentiment—in act, speech and thought. Social purity

* "Surely a day is coming when it will be known again what virtue is in purity and continence of life; how high, beneficent, sternly inexorable is the duty laid on every creature in regard to these particulars. Well, if such a day never come, then I perceive much else will never come. Magnanimity and depth of insight will never come; heroic purity of heart and of eye; noble pious valour to amend us and the age of bronze and lacquers, how can they ever come?"—*Carlyle*.

is chastity in body and chastity in spirit—stern, uncompromising repugnance to whatever is base or vulgar, indecent or immodest, in work or pleasure, speech or song, thought or sentiment, belief or life—stout, unrelenting opposition, despite the threat of law or the frown of society, the curse of pretentious piety or the loss of spurious attachment, to every rule or habit, practice or institution that defeats, or tends to defeat, the high purpose of human life by gilding shame with fashion or condoning carnal longing as venial. It brands as mean and cowardly, notwithstanding mimic nobility and affected bravery, the man who uses the frailty of the weak or the want of the needy for his own base purpose, who haunts beauty till it is tarnished or pursues innocence till it is vitiated, who repays friendship with infidelity, or affects piety to pollute all the more securely. It demurs to the law, though backed by power, that declines to shield the helpless from the ravage of the brutal or to screen the guileless from the craft of the wily. It decries the customs that invite undisguised shame to the hall of honour, or restore con-

victed impurity to the place of position. It silences the song that deifies the brute and proscribes the picture that perpetuates the immodest. It shuns the book that feeds the budding mind with "the sewage of the slum," and rebukes the speech that glorifies "our swine enjoyments." It loathes the longings "that fancy begets on youthful thoughts," and detests the desires that delight to wallow in "troughs of Zolaism." It stifles the taste that tinctures the soul with the taints of hell, and condemns the creed that caters to the carnal and calls it piety. On the other hand, it esteems the life that does not deviate into guilty pleasure, and honors him as a hero whoever guards the citadel of his senses. It upholds the law that vindicates morality, and espouses the custom that conforms to righteousness. It enjoys the speech that wells up from a clean heart, and appreciates the mood that contemplates the sublime. It values the song that softens the savage in man, and prizes the art that sublimates the pure. It cherishes the sentiment that aspires after the True, and lives by the faith that adores the All-Holy. In a word, it

consecrates the entire life, from the cradle of childhood to the 'skyey tent' of sagehood, unto the hastening of that 'far-off divine event' when man and woman, through their hallowed union, will achieve the glory of a God-illuminated self—that sovereign power (in Tennyson's thrice-happy words) which consists in self-controlling strength and self-knowing wisdom, in self-denying goodness and self-reverencing holiness.

This sacred end kept in view makes marriage the most hallowed of sacraments, though all the same the freest of choices—that solemn affiance of heart unto heart and that holy covenant of soul with soul, to force which is the lowest slavery, and to avoid which is the basest selfishness. To enquire how marriage originated is outside the scope of this paper: It suffices for the present purpose to point out that true national progress has everywhere proceeded parallel to an increasing sense of the sacredness of the family bond. So far as it can be traced, the march of mankind along the heights of civilisation has been in

the direction of "constitutional monarchy" as the strongest bulwark of the state, and of "legalised monogamy" as the firmest foundation of the home. But monogamy, like monotheism, largely fails in its results when inherited as time-honored tradition or assumed as extraneous conformity. Thus monogamy may degenerate into what has heartlessly been travestied as "one to one being cursedly confined," as monotheism may point only to a cold eternal something or an abstract reign of law. But elevated to supreme rule over the whole sphere of life, this "maiden passion for a maid" is the bountiful dispenser of "all that makes a man." In this "single love," as Ruskin has it, "is the sanctification of all man's strength, and the continuance of all his purposes." The true test of monogamy is the monarchy over the whole heart of the one all-endearing, even as the true mark of monotheism is the monolatry, with the whole soul, of the One All-sufficient. The essence of both is the complete devotion of one to the one; in both it is alone with the alone,

"O! there is something in marriage, like
 the veil of the temple of old,
 That screened the Holy of holies with
 blue and purple and gold!
 Something that makes a chamber, where
 only the one may come,
 A sacredness, too, and a silence, where
 joy that is deepest is dumb."

And social purity seeks to guard the
 sacredness of this 'chamber' with a vigilance
 and a devotion too wakeful for the slyest
 insinuation and too firm for the hardest temp-
 tation, and to adorn and enrich it with the
 most endearing affection of the heart and the
 most sublime devotion of the soul.

SOME PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF SOCIAL PURITY.

may next be glanced at, with special
 reference to our social conditions. A word of
 caution and of request may here be necessary
 that, as one descends from fine principles to
 unpleasant particulars, one runs the risk of
 offending "ears polite." But the duty of

speaking an unwelcome truth, according to occasion, being granted, the kind reader's judgment may decide whether the occasion does not exist. The first; then, of these particular aspects is

(a) *Religion and Social Purity.*

The intensest devotional attitude towards God is that sweet ecstasy — that enchanting *madhuryam* — in which He is “the Spouse Divine of human soul.” It is a conception at once direct, attractive and inspiring: not distant awe, indefinite familiarity or dependent trust, but voluntary and cheerful self-dedication. This master-passion of the soul naturally figures itself forth in a thousand suggestive symbols or allegories. But there are two distinct stages in a complete religious career—the detachment of the spirit from matter and the infusion of the spirit into matter; the retirement into the wilderness to perform the self-subduing fast, the return into the world to preside at the self-realising feast; the discipline of rigid abstinence from the world's revelries, the franchise of free participation in the world's charities. In

the first, religion is the noviciate under the austere rule of morality; in the second, religion is the vision on the mountain-top receiving a divine decalogue for the multitude below. The former is the period of discipleship, the latter the period of kinship to God. But when this order is violated, as it often must be in a country where "faith" is in so many instances divorced from "light," the liberties of the latter are anticipated as the licenses of the earlier stage, the counters of mature wisdom pass as the coin of green ignorance, and the ecstasies of the soul are perverted into the indulgences of the sense. Thus it comes of a huge unsettling of matters spiritual that many a custom or institution has arisen in our midst, whose sole justification is that it is associated with the great name of religion and shall not be questioned. But who can prevent the little infection from doing its work? The so-called faith of the majority has not only been stereotyped into a "zodiac of feasts and fasts" but also degenerated in not a few instances into pomp and performances far from elevating, if not positively

offensive. Occasions there be when inebriated enthusiasm, not content with bathing and feeding, bedding and wedding "the Lord of the Universe," plans for him a nocturnal adventure from which he is supposed to return *incognito* before dawn; or when unbridled eagerness, toiling to scale the heights of Indra's blissful abode, not only marks its progress with holocausts of dumb victims but terminates in a deed of sanctimonious sin that no system of morality dare justify. Celibacy, that self-forgetfulness in the service of the Lord degenerates into a social fiction, till a vestal *deva-dasi* is replaced by a shame-proof *demi-monde*, and sacerdotal vows betray their hollowness now in nude photos, then in criminal prodigality, anon in the incarceration of a holy priest for gallantry, and again in the exposure in a court of law of the life-history of a "born-lord" of countless devotees with particulars revolting enough for a foreigner to characterise the sorry individual as a creature not fit to be touched 'with a pair of hot tongs.' Devotion, that rejoicing of the soul in the graces of the Lord, degenerates

into vulgar vagaries that embody themselves in images and pictures of ruthless realism with dissolute details and express themselves in song or verse that purblind partisans alone can misname piety. Esotericism, that panacea for all the spiritual ailments of India, would fain galvanise these dead bones into life; but while the subtle apologist points to a mystic inside—a light behind Parrhasius's curtain, the simple world adopts the pleading to justify the palpable outside, and offensive orgies and voluptuous *leelas*, amorous ditties and “unholy *holis*” (as some one has termed them) stand out among the main features of the religious occupations of the majority. Nor does the evil stop there. This culpable indifference to the essentials of morality in the most absorbing concerns of life robs religion, oftentimes, of even ordinary solemnity and reverence; and not a few of the localities credited with the odour of sanctity need only a closer examination to be found to stink with impurity. Deplorable as this state of things, it is not beyond human help. The remedy lies with the community; which, outside the callousness

of custom is uncommonly sensitive in such matters. Let only men of light and leading look facts square in the face, let them enforce "morals" before they sanction "symbols" and insist on sterling character as the first proof of pious conviction; and the Augean stables will yet be cleansed. In our national ideals and traditions there is enough of chaste piety and inspiring purity to justify the hope that, if only this outer "abasement" could be swept away and the native grandeur revealed to the people's heart, our nation, too, may realise and appreciate the sublime truth that piety without purity is grosser than rank superstition — it is sanctified sin. But it is one thing to hold out indiscriminately on our past greatness; it is another to emulate it judiciously. The next topic that may engage attention is

(b) *Public recognition of social impurity.*

in any form and with any excuse. Ruskin has taught us that the acme of goodness is not merely to do the right thing but also to

love it and to enjoy it. The reverse is equally true that virtue fails of its essence, if abstinence from vice does not amount to a total refusal to lend countenance to it to any degree and under any circumstances. To pity and pass by the weakness that hides itself in the shade may be charity; to mark impurity as an unfortunate element in some lives and bind it down with restraints and penalties calculated to confine it to its natural place as the grossest of indulgences—the last and the lowest of “deadly sins,” may be statesmanship; to devise means and employ agencies to warn the unsuspecting or to reclaim the erring, may be philanthropy; but to trim immorality with fashion, to furnish it with facility, to countenance it with an apology, to provide it with a passport, or to charter it with a custom, is to set a premium on vice and to condemn the state or the society as “organised selfishness.” A state or a society is not bound to procure for the carnal cravings of the sensual any more than to provide for the gambling tendencies or the thieving propensities of the avaricious. On the other hand, nations or

communities are no less amenable than individuals to the ethical law that not to rebuke or protest against open vice is to half sanction it. The government that undertakes to protect base gratification from natural sting or merited stigma, incurs the heavy responsibility of furthering vice by making impurity venial. As Mrs. Josephine Butler has pointed out, state regulation of vice is but state sanction of vice; it is only "drilling, barracking and licensing vice"—procuring 'state-accredited instruments' for the most debasing use. Likewise, the society that assigns in its fold a recognised place and a decent position to professional lewdness—aye, confers on it the dignity of a caste and tricks it out with a 'catching' name condemns itself as "procuress to hell." The future of a nation depends wholly upon its estimate of man—its hope of human possibilities, and the community that counts social impurity, not a temporary failing to be strenuously overcome, but a lasting frailty to be reduced to a custom, looks down upon man as an "appetite incarnate." Says an eminent medical authority, "As soon prescribe theft or lying

or anything else that God has forbidden as prescribe in chastity;"* and what is public recognition given to social impurity by state or by society but this culpable prescription of in chastity? Closely related to this subject is the rather exciting question of

(c) *Social Purity and Public Life.*

If, as Carlyle holds, "society everywhere is some representation of a graduated worship of heroes," the life of a leader is a model to contemporaries and a heritage to posterity. That life embodies the moral ideal to be imitated by a thousand admirers; it maps out the moral path to be trodden by a thousand followers. When one of England's wisest politicians laid down that he who would be

* The opinions of two other eminent medical men may be cited here. According to one of them, "there are no organs so much under control as those of generation. Their qualities peculiarly adapt them to subservency to man's moral nature." The other observes, "No man ever yet was in the slightest degree or way the worse for perfect continence, or the better for incontinence."

a statesman must first prove himself a gentleman, the demand really meant that the aspiration to be honoured with public confidence implied the covenant to be clean and pure beyond every insinuation, above every suspicion. If, as Lecky states, "pure domestic life" is amongst the 'strongest' of those forces that bear a nation onward to improvement, the private life of one that would mould the thoughts, guide the energies and thus shape the destinies of a nation is a public concern. Let it be once conceded that there is good ground for the many moral restraints which a wise government imposes on its public servants; and it will be idle to contend that those who would prescribe the career of a nation need not rise to the standard of those who should manage its passing concerns, or that the integrity enforced about "barbaric pearl and gold" may be safely relaxed concerning what is the most precious jewel of woman and the dearest possession of man. Both may be private as single incidents; but both are public as examples or precedents. In both, the weakness of the few becomes the excuse of the many. In both,

the purpose of life is vitiated and the ideal of life is lowered. As Milton very truly points out, it implies a certain lack of manly greatness — a weak mind that “aims not beyond a higher design” than mere pleasure — to succumb to amorous charms. In chastity, as Mohammad warns us, is not merely an evil course but a foul thing. Does it not, further, sound as mere mockery that the call to fairness and equity should come from one who did not scruple to despoil a woman of her birth-right or a home of its happiness, or who did not hesitate to snatch a selfish gratification which, in one respect, is blacker than cold-blooded murder, as invariably implicating the peace or the hope of an accomplice? Concupiscence, no less than cupidity, is incompatible with greatness — with real integrity and broad catholicity; and to ignore this fact is to drop half our kind out of account. Quite unavailing is the defence which compares the disinterested leader of a nation’s hope and activities to an agent that knows no higher motive than money — a lawyer, a doctor or an engineer. It is a sign of diseased enthusiasm, if not a mark of the rather

low notion prevailing about apparently high objects of life, that one who surrenders comfort and position and accepts loss and reproach for a humble or neglected cause, is placed by his professed supporters under the same vinculum with the skilled workman ever available to the party that "pays." Unless discipleship deteriorate into what Carlyle stigmatises as 'spanielship,' it cannot be true that he who may be the sorriest or the most indifferent of mortals and he who fears the Lord and walks in the light of His wisdom are alike fitted to marshal the energies and forecast the future of a nation. The former is "a soldier of fortune" whose cleverness any one may buy; the latter, "a guide, philosopher and friend" entitled to our profoundest respect and, on that very account, bound to satisfy our highest expectations in social virtues. He is a 'Representative Man' whom wisdom and gratitude alike would decline to measure with the mercenary standard of a paid pilot; and to demand this personal purity in one thus exalted is but a fresh instance of the ancient truth that he who will control shall begin

with self-control, that he who will rule without shall not be subject to anarchy within. Not a few of the supporters of this cause may advantageously

(d) work among the children and the youth

of the land. Apart from the nature of the public education now in vogue in India, much too little, notoriously little, is being done to build up character—to foster noble virtues and create high aspirations—in the generations-to-be. It is, indeed, agreeably surprising that where such scanty attention is given to the healthy rearing-up of children, the tone of general morality is nevertheless, so satisfactory. That betokens the innate goodness of human nature and the intrinsic worth of some of the principles, now hardened into customs, which were the original moulds of our national life. But the painful experience of every one that has endeavoured to be of some public service almost invariably reports that, for a large and civilised nation, most disappointingly few are the instances in which our countrymen dare rise above what may

be called "neighbourly goodness." A chivalric spirit (if that term be expressive enough) is notably wanting among us. It is not mere altruism; it is, so to speak, social transcendentalism. This national drawback early evinces itself in our youth. Our boys may be rightly credited with being more docile and better-behaved than their western brethren; but are they not also more 'tortuous' in their ways—more wanting in 'directness'?* Does not a tendency to "look about," when they ought to "look in the face," early sprout up in them? One chief reason for this defect is the position of women in India—not, as is generally said, low or hard, but rather uninspiring, somewhat deficient in the capacity to evolve in man that refined gentleness which, without weakening the vigour, strains out the coarseness. Brought up under such "home influences," our youth betray either precocious vulgarity in the

* A careful and sympathetic European observer of our nation has remarked that India produces neither so many rogues nor so many heroes as a country in the West does.

lower classes, or “studied” bashfulness (young Marlow-like) in the higher classes, of society. Either way there is the absence of ‘naturalness;’ which to a large extent accounts for the one peculiar characteristic, almost national, of so many of our homes; which, again, are not impure or unhappy, but uninvigorating. Work among our boys and youth, not expressly educational, has, therefore, to be directed towards evoking this *verve*—this instinctive fairness and natural fineness—in them. Not that efforts bearing directly on our question of social purity are quite superfluous. If the experience of teachers, watchful and themselves good, counts for aught, and if the painful tale often told by doctors of all denominations be even partially true, there are quite too many instances, often leading to grave consequences and at times ending even fatally, of the early tasting of the forbidden fruit;* and what better

* Alarming particularly are the accounts given by several medical men of “that hideous sin, engendered by vice and practised in solitude” by a large number of students and other young men. It is to be hoped that the type of hotels and “eating-houses” from which nefarious stories come out occasionally, like blasts from hell, is fast becoming obsolete.

can be expected in a country where so few feel the duty of placing a check upon their tongues or their tastes for their dear ones' sake, and where painted Jezebels are permitted to 'jaunt in the most respectable localities, at times in the very neighbourhood of educational institutions? But the main effort has to be directed to preventative rather than to remedial work—to forearm the youth against coming dangers rather than to snatch them from present evils. What our community needs is the formation of associations, on the lines of 'the guilds of honour' in the west, with membership large enough for fraternity but quite within bounds for discipline, worked in a fostering spirit by persons that have a sacred sense of the promise and the possibility of childhood or youth, and inculcating, on broad principles and in devout reverence, along with spotless purity the kindred virtues of unflinching honesty and large-hearted magnanimity. This will necessarily be slow work but, in the fulness of God's time, sure. It is true that there are already many institutions in the land, professing to promote this very end;

but the question has to be boldly asked and honestly answered whether their strong point is ethics or athletics—be the latter lingual or physical. A fair beginning must be made; and, if anywhere, it is in this work that men are superior to methods. Every life lived under the Great Task-Master's eye is of account here.

RAJAH RAMMOHAN ROY*

(1906.)

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Man's necessity is God's opportunity. The spirit of India, laid low in the dust by the sheer exhaustion of internal division and strife, groaned for a great unifier and reinvigorator; and Mercy deputed Rammohan. Let us remember he was born in 1772. Let us review the condition of the country at that day. With knowledge confined to a microscopic few, with the spirit of the mediæval religious revival exhausted or transformed into domineering militarism, with ceremony usurping the place of religion and superstition elbowing out reason, with the sense of the One Supreme God dissipated into a myriad pantheon, with race set against race in mortal hostility and caste distinctions accentua-

* Extract from the Presidential Address, Indian Theistic Conference, Calcutta—1906.

ted into haughtiness or servility, with natural feelings atrophied by mortifying practices and morality fossilised into unthinking custom, with kingdoms set up and blown down like bubbles and victories celebrated by devastation or forced conversion, with property arbitrary as anarchy and intercourse forbidden by insecurity, this ancient land, was in the very throes of a huge trial and tribulation—limb torn from limb, hand raised against hand, heart turning away from heart. Into the midst of this dark, dreary scene was let down Rammohan, strong-willed and tender-hearted, keen-witted and noblesouled. He had passed through a befitting training and discipline; he had fraternised with different schools of learning in their cloistered seclusion, he had plunged into the predominant theologies at their prime sources; he had communed with nature in her sublime solemnity; he had imbibed the sanctities of the world with the keen ardour of a truth-seeker and the reverent avidity of a sensitive soul; he had mixed with his kind in busy bustle, he had widened his vision with extensive travels; he had passed through the

ordeal of domestic chastisement and social ostracism ; he had mourned for the victims of dire famine ; he had writhed in heart at the ghastly sight of the immolations of superstition at the fane of that " hood-winked queen " of the unthinking—flint-hearted custom ; but also he had caught the dawning

mpse of a coming light ; he had heard the gentle whisper of an advancing hope ; he had felt the first pulse of a returning strength ; he had perceived the vision of an abiding harmony amidst the internecine strifes. Here was one that could truly say, " Whatever concerns man is dear to me ; my heart is the home of all the race." Such was the rich out-fit with which he set out on his great life-journey as the forerunner of a new era : such was the arduous novitiate served out by this bringer of a new message to India—perchance to the world.

Comprehensive past all comparison as was the Rajah's view of a full life, he was essentially a religious genius. He knew that human growth was endogenous—from the soul outwards, He was sure that out of the

heart were all the issues of life. His faith in the saving, regenerating power of the Spirit was unbounded. To him a being not illumined by belief and trust in God, a progress not impelled by a religious force, was worse than inconceivable—it was degenerating, degrading. To the myriad ills of India the sovereign remedy was a living faith in a wise and living God—either a cloistered faith that scorns and shuns society, nor a busy careworn faith that assigns the leisure hour to a hurried worship, nor the prudent faith that imports a God to watch a truant world, nor yet a speculative faith that prefixes a creator to a law-governed universe. It was a direct vision of an indwelling Glory, a personal communion with an immanent Spirit, an implicit trust in an all-regulating Providence, a whole-hearted devotion to an all-controlling Purpose, a cheerful obedience to an all-governing Will, a conscious participation in an all-saving Grace, rapturous delight in an all-entrancing Beauty. It was a faith to which the universe was a consecrated temple, the soul a holy shrine, conscience a sacred oracle, duty a divine ordinance, truth

the imperishable gospel, love the perfect rule, life a progressive pilgrimage, humanity an abounding grace. It was a faith that interpreted law as the method, force as the will, and matter as the localised potency, of God; it was a faith that esteemed the world as a reflection, the soul as a vision, and history as a panoramic presentation of the nature and the purpose of the Deity. With Rammohan Roy the man, this faith—this sublime, invigorative theism—was a passion, a power and a joy that made of him a hero and a prophet. To Rammohan Roy the nation-builder, this vital, fertile faith—a faith lofty as the love of God and ample as the wants of man—furnished alike the enduring basis and the cementing strength, the ample range and the towering greatness, of a united and vigorous nation. The deep, perennial source of this quickening faith he found welling up, in increasing volume and purity, from the heart of humanity. Religion he held to be a natural, irresistible instinct in mankind; it came out with the irrepressible spontaneity of a craving, an appetite that knew no satisfaction till it realised itself in a felt contact

with what was believed to be the Supreme. This, the key-note of his religious message, he struck in what was perhaps his maiden work—*Tuhfutul Muwahhidin*—a most remarkable pamphlet, at once terse as ‘wit,’ direct as sincerity, penetrating as insight, and comprehensive as genius, could make it. In it he gently limned out those grand truths of a vital and progressive Theism of which his whole life, as a man of letters and a man of action, presented so rich and inspiring an example: *viz.*, the eternal verity of the religious sense; the essential unity of divine truth; the inexorable uniformity of divine law; the inviolable right of spiritual freedom; the impartial universality of divine inspiration; the increasing glory of divine vision; the inevitable fluctuations and varieties of religious expression; the imperative duty and the incalculable worth of spiritual worship; the manifest obligation of tolerance and sympathy; the mutual fulfilment of faith and service in love. This message of a whole-souled faith in an All-perfect God and a whole-hearted love for an ever-expanding humanity runs through his works with an intensity of conviction, a

buoyancy of hope, a wealth of application and a persistence of purpose, that are undoubtedly marvellous for his times and surroundings. Verily, he is a most impressive instance, as has been observed, of divine illumination even in the darkest of ages and amidst the dreariest of prospects.

This spirit of a deep and broad faith he proceeded to apply to, and realise in, the national life. The work of Rammohan Roy, as of every great *nation-builder*, was fourfold: to reassess the national heritage, to replenish the national resources, to infuse a new quickening and harmonising spirit, and to use the awakened energies for the new national wants and demands.

1. The hope and assurance of a reviving nation springs largely from its "storied past." Therein lies the evidence of national possibilities, the guarantee of national solvency and in a large measure the impetus to national endeavour. The inspiration of the ancestral example is the cheering outlook of the dutiful successor; the acquisition of

the sturdy sire the starting capital of the ambitious son; the glory of past national achievement the load-star — the light on the path — of the advancing generations. India's wealth, her richest acquisition and her highest achievement, is the sublime consciousness, the vision, of the all-permeating and all-transfiguring, all-embracing and all-fulfilling, all-absorbing and all-transcending Spirit. Limitations—nay, aberrations—there might be; but the distinguishing mark, the predominant note, the prime concern, of blessed *Bharatavarsha* is God-consciousness. The central principle, the master-passion, the 'driving power,' of her accredited worthies is God-vision. To trace the lineaments and study the ways, to follow the foot-steps and bow to the will, to imitate the purposes and reproduce the nature — in a word, to realise and fulfil oneself as a projected emblem — of the Divine Spirit is the one prevailing national ideal, surviving all vicissitudes; and to have saved from oblivion, purified from accretions, and re-adjusted for modern needs this indwelling Theistic spirit of India was the Rajah's high service to the nation. His

translations of the Upanishads, his elucidation of the Vedanta, his exposition of *Gayatri*, his defence of Hindu Theism, his advocacy of spiritual worship, his passionate pleading for a devout life as incomparably superior to the most engrossing ceremonialism — all these were suggested and sustained by that patriotic and nation-building purpose of re-instating a living liberal faith amidst clogging symbolism and enervating superstition. He re-directed the national intellect to the teachings of the ancient national scriptures and re-opened the national soul to the inspiration of the most honoured national seers. He re-iterates with tireless insistence, and pleads with glowing earnestness, that the most authoritative prophecy of India proclaims the absolute unity, the profound incomprehensibility and the sole-omnipotence of the Supreme Being; recognises Him alone as the object of worship and obedience, and His worship alone as the way to beatitude; claims only for His worship in spirit and in truth the virtue of efficacy; and declares the inseparability of pure morality from true worship. His heart deplores that the nation lost itself in a maze

of observances and stultified itself by bowing before uninspiring ideals; his soul grieves that the one holy inner shrine of the Eternal Spirit was deserted for the host of outer fanes where no grace dwelt and no glory shone. He urges the imperative duty, as he asserts the inalienable right, of every individual soul to approach and to adore, in reverence and in praise, the Almighty Author of all. He declares and assures that the salvation of India lay entirely in the consecration of the nation's heart and might to the worship and the service of that "One only without a second" that the pick of the national conscience and the national scripture ever faithfully clung to.

It may be worth while dwelling a little on the happy spirit in which the genius of Rammohan Roy interpreted and used the national scripture. World-old, perhaps, is the conflict between the so-called national and the so-called rational instincts of man; yet in their harmony lies the wise conservation and the confident progress of the spirit of a nation. Intimate is the link of the present

with the past, and rich the bequest of by-gone ages to succeeding times. Sacred, however, is the voice of conscience, and eternal the life-time of truth. Shall India barter away her birth-right of spiritual freedom for the ready pottage of antiquity; or shall she run the prodigal's risk of tearing away from home and dwelling among inhospitable aliens? But to Ramnohan Roy's discerning spirit there appeared no such distressing necessity. To the keen gaze of his soul there lay bare, amidst the puzzling heap of national scripture, a fund of eternal truth and inexpressible joy which, sympathetically studied, judiciously adopted, intelligently imparted and reverently received, might form the pabulum—the staple food—for his and many a coming generation of eager seekers after God. In this spirit (as Max Muller has thoughtfully pointed out), not of a prudent adherence to mere antiquity, but of an honest search for, and a grateful appreciation of, the seeds of imperishable truth, he sought to lay down the Vedanta of the Upanishads, stripped of its strange and disguising coverings, as the basis of the new national life. There he re-

joiced to meet the seers of ancient wisdom—types of Emerson's "teachers from within"—proclaiming (to adopt the happy language of the same sage) a God, not of tradition, not of rhetoric, not even of inferential conviction, but of direct sight—a vision and an ecstasy—that circled the world with a halo of celestial glory and transported the soul with the raptures of Heaven. There he was grateful to find a revelation of God's truth that, for loftiness of conception, depth of insight, serenity of contemplation, fervour of devotion, austerity of discipline, perfection of disinterestedness and intensity of beatitude, would ever remain unsurpassed, if at all equalled, in the history of the world. Thus he founded his message on the Upanishads for their intrinsic worth as "the one unsectarian basis and meeting-place"—the suggestive source and the harmonising synthesis—of the various schools of Indian thought. Among the national scriptures he valued them for their divine authority of eternal truth; among the great "world-books" he welcomed them for their bracing, cheering national air. Thus does the soul retain an open inlet for fresh

divine inspiration as well as a healthy susceptibility to the national mode or trend of thought and sentiment; thus are individual conscience and historic continuity harmonised. Free yet authoritative, true yet familiar, lasting yet homely, imperishable yet national, the Upanishads were to him the national (swadesi) type and mould for "Universal Religion." Thus did he regain a national scripture for the rational soul and furnish to the nation that hope and confidence from the past which is the indispensable precursor to national growth and expansion. Thus was he the first and greatest reviver of the 'unfalsified,' 'undamaged' Vedanta in the nation, as well as the harbinger of the light of the East to a Western horizon not yet quite clear of the primitive mists of a detached, heaven-enthroned God and a fallen, eden-banished man.

2. Rammohan Roy, the ardent restorer of the Upanishadic Vedanta as the deepest insight of the Hindu (the Eastern) genius, was likewise the gifted interpreter of the richest expression of the Semitic (the Western)

genius—the heart of Jesus. The India of the Rishis, rich and blessed in the wealth of the soul, was, however, not—could not be—the India of Rammohan Roy. Alike external pressure and internal throb were all along modifying and recasting the national ideals and replenishing and redirecting the national energies. As a masterly exposition of this theme by that man of colossal talents and cosmopolitan sympathies— Mr. Ranade—has made it familiar, a momentous change over the entire field of Indian life resulted from the compact of Hindu and Mahammadan civilisations, culminating in that immortal declaration of Guru Nanak that he was neither a Hindu nor a Mahammadan but ‘the equal soul’s brother’ of both in the worship of that *Nirakar Akalpurush* in whom “Ram and Raheem” passed into one. But Heaven had ordained India to be the spiritual *Prayag* of the world—the sacred spot of the congruent confluence of the mighty world-currents of East and West—of the joy and the strength that come of a lasting, vital harmony of intellect and will, knowledge and power. A vaster and more comprehensive synthesis than

had hitherto been, realised—had hitherto been perhaps, possible — had to be attempted: a reverent garnering of “the wisdom of the East and the West,” a holy communion of sage and prophet in truth and goodness. In this devout spirit of genuine yet thoughtful enthusiasm Rammohan Roy submitted his “Precepts of Jesus, the guide to peace and happiness” to the world, as a spiritual and ethical code calculated powerfully to conduce to the elevation of “men’s ideas to high and liberal notions of God” and to “the maintenance of the peace and harmony of mankind at large.” To bring home to the “business and bosom” of India the serene godliness, the self-sacrificing love, the ethical vigour and the winning grace of Jesus and thus to enshrine the Heaven-appointed author of the Christian life and civilization of the West in the heart of the nation, was the avowed object of this remarkable publication. The warm controversy it led to was, perhaps, the indirect testimony to its worth and its necessity. Now that with the lapse of nearly three generations all the personal and occasional element in that tough fight for truth

has ceased to disturb the vision, the work may justly be valued as the prophetic forecast of that great reconciliation — that organic federation — of East and West through which every faithful and progressive nation will realise the fulness of its potency in a universal humanity. The future of India is rich with a promise almost baffling present estimation. even because it appears to be that eternal capital of the Spirit-empire whither pilgrim souls from all quarters with their heart-offerings of ideals, aspirations, endeavours and achievements, are drawn as to the shrine immortal Love and whence will issue forth a Light radiant as the glory of the Lord and a Peace passing all mere human understanding. That this ancient land, thus high-honoured of Heaven, may fulfil this lofty destiny, depends undoubtedly on her readiness to imbibe this catholic—liberal and reverent-spirit of Rammohan Roy — a spirit inspired by the faith, and active in the hope, that it is with the sublime soul-contributions and the loving heart-tributes of all worthy peoples that God will at last make “the pile complete.” This spirit, now fairly familiar, at

any rate in theory, it was the unique distinction of Rammohan Roy to have inaugurated; and here is one further proof that he is the builder of the modern Indian nation, the father of New India.

It is very cheering to note that this gradual commingling of the best in the East and in the West for the ultimate perfection of both, aye, of the whole humanity, as being Heaven's own method, is realised in an increasing degree on all hands. Without subscribing to the sharp distinction drawn between Indian and Christian Theism as respectively enunciating the Being and the Character of God—for, to my mind, theism (Indian or Christian) to be a religion should be equally related, with necessary limitations, to both aspects of the question—we may all rejoice to note this as the one root-idea beneath Dr. Hall's inspiring lectures. Equally evident is this conception of the correlation of the Veda and the Bible in Dr. Deussen's renowned work on "the Philosophy of the Upanishads." The East and the West are, according to him, complementary as the

Intelligence and the Will. The *Upanishads* seek to clear the vision of truth from the mists of ignorance and illusion; the Bible would nerve the volition with the inspiration of love. Prof. Upton puts the same truth in another form (in his *Hibbert Lectures*) : that the Aryan religious belief seeks to realise God as the self-manifesting substance of all objective phenomena and the inner, universal unity of all Reason; while the Semitic faith is noteworthy for emphatically recognising the infinite, absolute authority of God as the sanction for the sense of Duty and Righteousness asserting itself in every individual soul. To all candid minds, the position is now unassailable that for an intense, glowing God-consciousness and a sublime "ethical statement" the Vedantic philosophy is *par excellence*. It should be equally beyond all doubt that for an awe-inspiring sense of God as the author of conscience, and for "lighting up" morality with a cheering emotion and bracing up the will into a "cross-bearing" power, Christianity is "beyond compare." According to the *Vedanta* the story of Life is the sublime Epic of wisdom of which the

Author is the Hero, too; according to the *Bible* the course of Life is the inspiring Drama of Righteousness of which the Author is the Protagonist, too. The *Vedanta* is the cradle of the sage and the seer; the *Bible* is the nursery of the prophet and the martyr.

Nor need this "larger hope" of a brighter and broader day into which East and West shall at last pour their converging lights, be dimmed by the doubt of its denationalising tendency, of its incompatibility with the manifest variety of human growth. To lower uplifting ideals, to impair inner vitality, to weaken a chaste "passion for the past," is to denationalise; but to swell the stream of life with incoming currents, to drain out its accumulated impurities, and to level down its hindering barriers of prejudice, is truly to renationalise. Nations are shifting survey-marks for a division of labour, not rigid ring-fences of alienated hearts or senseless sheaths of hide-bound souls. They are as the shielding shell that breaks and falls when the life it has nurtured learns to move and fly. With increasing wisdom, the vision takes in

a wider horizon; the heart expands with broader sympathies; the soul reveals vaster affinities; the petty rivalries of to-day are merged in the larger fraternities of tomorrow; and we learn, with Zeno, to count men "not as Athenians and Persians, but as joint tenants of a common field to be tilled for the advantage of all and each." The course of human evolution lies between undifferentiated unity and all-embracing union. To emerge from shapeless agglomeration, to clash in a truceless struggle for existence, to be echeloned into individual development, to race for common prizes, to rally for lucrative commerce, to co-operate in combined philanthropy, to congregate with kindred ideals, to commune in conjoint worship, and thus to find each man's good in all men's brotherhood: so seems to run the gamut of growth—of differentiation, expansion, consolidation and harmony—from disintegration to reintegration. The pilgrimage of humanity is out of the unrealised one into the realised one; even as its source and substance is the essentially undivided, though phenomenally apportioned, one. Has not he, the oracle of the

Over-soul, taught us that "one blood rolls uninterruptedly an endless circulation through all men, as the water of the globe is all one sea, and, truly seen, its tide is one"? This was an intuitive perception of Rammohan Roy; who was, not only (to use Prof. Sir M. William's language) "the first earnest-minded investigator of the science of comparative religion that the world has produced," but also (as Prof. Max Muller put it) the first to complete a connected life-current between the East and the West—the inspired engineer in the world of faith that cut the channel of communication, the spiritual Suez, between sea and sea land-locked in the rigid sectarianism of exclusive revelation, and set their separate surges of national life into one mighty world-current of universal humanity.

3. This quickening and harmonising spirit—this passion for spiritual faith and worship, and this trust in the organic unity of truth and humanity—Rammohan Roy sought to embody in the Brahma Samaj, the Indian Monotheistic Church. It would be beside my present purpose to discuss the

question as to how far our Samaj has realised the original idea of its gifted founder. That it is yet far—very far—from the goal goes without saying; but that it has never wholly lost sight of, and still less has consciously given up, that ideal is, I believe, equally plain. Quite imperfect and incorrect, though very common, is the notion that the Brahma Samaj is a crusade against idolatry and a protest against caste. All reorganisation—all national upheaval—has an inevitable negative side, even as all cultivation involves an amount of weeding and pruning. But the Theistic faith is a positive, constructive agency, advocating and “making for” spiritual worship—individual and congregational—and spiritual freedom through spiritual unity. As the immortal Trust-Deed—itself a production of a rare religious genius—defined its object, the Brahma Samaj was to be a congregation, a spiritual fraternity of all, without any artificial distinction, for the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable Author and Preserver of the Universe, limited by no sectarian conception, dimmed by no mask of image or effigy, diver-

ted by no oblation or offering, tainted by no life-destroying sacrifices, tarnished by no sectarian rancour; but fragrant with a sober, orderly, religious and devout spirit, and fruitful in promoting the contemplation of God, the union of man, and the great virtues of morality and piety, charity and benevolence. Is it too much to say that, bearing any name and adopting any expression, this in spirit and essence is bound to be the only saving faith and strengthening grace of the India that-is-to-be?

The predominant element in this new spirit that Rammohan Roy would infuse into his race, is the spiritual worship of the One Supreme God. Why this land, with a widespread, highly refined monotheistic ideal, did not adopt an unadulterated monolatrous worship, it is not, perhaps, easy to determine. It may be, as Dr. Deussen suggest, that this sublime idealism was more an 'intuition'—a flash of genius — without the "substruction" of a detailed conception that could vivify, as it would realise itself in, the every-day practice of religion. Or it may be, as Mr.

Ameer Ali urges, that this theoretical idealism was realised by the nation, as a whole, only as material pantheism which can easily fraternise with idolatry and is saved from a vulgar fetishism only by its postulate of a unifying whole running through and gathering up all. To whatever cause this strange — almost singular — state be due, Rammohan Roy laid all the emphasis of his teaching and persuasion on the supreme virtue and inexhaustible efficacy of the spiritual worship of the Eternal Author and Saviour of all as a regenerating, reintegrating power; and only to the extent to which the Brahma Samaj loyally adheres to and works out this central idea of its founder will it reproduce his spirit and fulfil its mission. On this score may there never be a whisper of doubt, a moment of hesitation! May it be the one sacred debt that those who call him master will ever feel they owe to his revered memory to invite every child of India, in un failing faith and by inspiring example, to participate in this priceless blessing,—this supreme bliss—of worshipping and adoring our Maker and Master, Mentor and Guide, Parent and

Saviour, in the direct, unveiled communion of spirit and in the unflinching service of Truth!

His inborn synthetic temper is inherited by his followers even in this holy office of adoration. The worship of the Brahma Samaj is a puzzle to those outside it—the thoughtful shake their heads over it, the light-hearted jeer at it. But this “divine service” is the joint gift of the East and the west—of invocation inducing adoration, of meditation mellowed into communion, of praise preluding prayer, of confession consecrated as self-surrender. As for conjoint, congregational worship, beyond the preliminary stage of *bhajan*—of song and dance—it is new again to the spirit of ancient India. Yet what is congregational worship but the profoundest expression of our common humanity in a spiritual fraternity? In conjoint worship man approaches, appreciates and embraces man as a God-illuminated soul. Therein soul sits with soul in a sacred ring, soul moves with soul in a holy circle, around the One in whose Light they dwell, by whose Love they live. Therein soul hails and rejoices in soul for the sake of, as dear

unto, Him, the Spouse Divine of all human souls. Congregational worship is the *Brindavan* of soul; and in hearty congregational worship lies the ultimate solution of all human problems. This, as Monier-Williams observes, is "not the least of the benefits effected by Rammohan Roy."

It may incidentally be mentioned that Rammohan Roy's was an incessantly praying soul. He hallowed his daily ablutions with prayer; he warded off the temptation of a busy world with prayer. The devotion of his heart to its Lord poured itself out in soul-stirring strains; his hours of sickness and sorrow were sanctified with silent communion. Strong with the strength of the Almighty will be Rammohan's church so long, and so far, as it sustains—reproduces and spreads—his spirit of ceaseless, ardent prayer. For through prayer the vows of man are exalted as the purpose of the All-wise, and the resolutions of man are tempered with the will of the Omnipotent.

The other prominent element of the new spirit that Rammohan Roy would pour into

the ancient heart of Aryavarta, is the spiritual unity, as realised through the spiritual freedom and the spiritual equality, of mankind. To him the presence of rich, saving truth in every great dispensation was an axiom; the universality of revelation a verified historical fact; the direct approach of every soul to its Deity an implication, a corollary, of spiritual worship; and the ultimate salvation of all a guarantee of God's immeasurable love and invincible righteousness. How invigorating, liberalising, harmonising and uplifting this new spirit is may be realised through a just and fair estimation of the work and the examples of those that, vivified by the inspiration of the Rajah's life, have reproduced through themselves the part which he played in the building up of the nation. Superior as every great soul is to all creeds and cults, it may yet be asked where, save in a liberal worshipful monotheistic church, could be fostered the spiritual versatility of Keshub Chunder and the "catholic wholeness" of Ranade. Such souls are the credentials of the Brahma Samaj. May it be ever true to, ever worthy of, their spirit!

Then alone will the prophecy be fulfilled that the foundation of the Brahma Samaj by Ram-mohan Roy was "the dawn of the greatest change that has ever passed over the Hindu mind."

4. But few words are needed to sketch the way in which he applied the new spirit to the wants and demands of the age. Here, too, the Rajah's synthetic spirit served to elevate the social sentiment and to enlarge the social outlook of the country. In fact, it is here that his nation-building purpose stands out prominent even to the casual observer. The ethical modes of the East and the West have been distinguished (by Dr. Deussen, for instance) as subjective and objective. Perhaps, this is in keeping with the predominant religious ideal of each. Anyhow, it may be broadly stated that the ethical method of the East is personal discipline, of the West social service; and that the ethical end of the East is self-refinement, of the West social efficiency. Of this comes the old feud between the ways of the individual and the demands of society. But unto the higher harmony of a soul that

beholds in East and West the two wings of the same mansion, may not the true ethical gospel lie in the self-realising fulfilment of the individual through social service and the perfection of society through individual development? Be this as it precisely may, it was through some such method of the co-ordination of individual and social interests that Rajah Rammohan Roy employed the new spirit typified by him in furthering national progress in all directions. How he lived every day of his life for his country and for humanity; how he toiled and spent himself as under his great Master's eye; how he dedicated his talents and resources to the religious, moral, educational, social, political and economical needs of his nation; aye, how his spirit went forth and his arm was stretched out, in sorrowing sympathy or rejoicing fellowship, even beyond the concerns of India — all that is for ever incorporated in the story of the race. Verily, verily Rammohan is the *Bhageerath* of the ever-expanding stream of modern Indian life.

Such, then, realised in my humble soul, expressed in my scanty language, was the

spirit of Rajah Rammohan Roy — a comprehensive spirit of faith and freedom, of reverence and investigation, of simplicity and penetrativeness, of devotion and service, of enthusiasm and endurance. Into his soul poured in light and strength from all points of heaven; out of his heart went forth love and sympathy to all quarters of life. To his country he was the bridge between "her unmeasured past and her incalculable future." To the world at large he is the first arch — the earliest colossus — that spanned the East and the West. He was the morning star, the matin music, of the new Age, in which the many camp-lights will fade in the glory of a peaceful day, and the voices of various hosts will join in a universal hallelujah. The descendant of the Rishis, the disciple of Jesus, the ardent worshipper of the "One only without a second," the passionate devotee of freedom, the sorrowing friend of the bereaved, the dauntless champion of the oppressed, the merry companion of children, the sage councillor of statesmen, he was even the prototype of the coming race, where man's soul shall be the mirrored

miniature of the world. Drawing his spiritual nurture from the great world-repositories of faith and hope, and realising in himself the abiding affinities of all revelations of God, his soul was one of the springs—the far-off sources—of that international spiritual federation, that distant divine event of universal humanity, to which the whole creation moves. If, according to Max-Muller, the greatest discovery of even a century renowned for its revolutionising discoveries, is that the original God-consciousness of the Hindu, Greek, Roman and Teuton was radically one. Rammohan Roy was an accredited pioneer of that sovereign discovery. Aye, he was likewise the herald that proclaimed that, philology apart, “Jove and Jehovah” are counterparts, supplementing and fulfilling each other, the God of consciousness and conscience, of reason and righteousness, being ultimately One. The Dream of Akbar was the Vision of Rammohan Roy. It was his epoch-making genius that sketched the plan and laid the foundation of that world-wide Temple that would be

“Neither Pagod, Mosque, nor Church,
 But loftier, simpler always open-doored
 To every breath of heaven ; and Truth and Peace
 And Love and Justice came and dwelt therein.”

JALAL-UD-DIN RUMI*

(1931)

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Among the “immortals” stands in glorious eminence Maulana Rumi, matchless in his mastery as an exponent of Sufism.

This Sufism is in all essentials the same as what, in Western thought, is known as Mysticism. Mysticism has been defined as “the science of ultimates,” “the science of self-evident Reality”; which science employs the methods, not of discursive reason, but of intuitive perception. According to this system of understanding the World of Being, there subsists beneath the surface-self of the senses the transcendent self of the spirit;

* Extract from the Vote of thanks after a discourse by Janab Sayyeduddin Sahab Bahadur, B. A., during the Brahmotsav celebrations at Cocanada (22-1-31)—since amplified and written out.

and the true aim and supreme end of man, as distinct from the animal, is to probe through the surface-self and discover the transcendent self; to rend the veils, in Sufi language, and perceive the Truth (Al-Haq)—in other words, to establish intimate relations with the God of absolute perfection and to practise unfailing fellowship with the God of infinite love. Man, divine in his essential nature, possesses a boundless capacity for wisdom and love which the God of infinite Wisdom and Love alone can satisfy. Hence, the mystic life has been designated “the sweet madness,” “hunger for the Absolute,” “passion of love,” “excursion to the Rose-garden of union;” and the mystics have been styled “humanity’s ambassadors to the Absolute” to vindicate the irrepressible longing in man for inalienable union with God.

Union and *Love* are two words of frequent occurrence and of profound significance in Sufi literature. They, therefore, demand some attention in this context. The soul of man is an “ethereal spark of heavenly flame,” a

ray of "emanation" from the Eternal Light. As a "spark," it must every moment spring from the Parent Flame; as an "emanation," it must every moment emerge from the Prime Essence. Thus, from its very nature, the soul can escape extinction only by intimate association with — nay, unremitting participation in, the spirit of God. The persistent urge for this participation is "Love;" the ultimate achievement of this participation is "Union." "Love" is self-dedication to God; "Union" is self-realisation in God. "Love" is the complete consecration of the desires of the heart to the purposes of God; "Union" is the absolute identification of the life of the soul, in thought and emotion and will, with the being of God. In Rumi's own words, this is *Love* — to fly heavenwards, to look beyond the range of the eye, to penetrate the windings of the heart, to long to be wrapped up in God. Again, of *Union* he sings, "With two forms and with two figures but with one soul, Thou and I; individuals no more, but mingled in ecstasy, joyous and serene, Thou and I."

Lines of surpassing beauty in Jami's

Salaman and Absal thus set forth the process of "Union in Love:"

'For ever to gaze on my Beloved,
Gaze, till going out of gazing
Grow to being Her I gaze on;
She and I no more, but in one
Undivided Being blended.
And whoever Love's City
Enters, finds room but for One
And in that Oneness *Union*.'

This "union in love" which has been termed the "spiritual intoxication" that lifts the soul to a transfiguring vision of Eternal Truth, is, it should be noted, not unilateral; it is reciprocal; it is the eternal quest of God and Man for each other. Sufism holds, in Rumi's words, that "the love that arises in *this* heart is reciprocated in *that* Heart; when the love of God throbs in thy heart, be sure God also feels love for thee." Nay, more. God is the Supreme Magnet that brings all souls to love: Love is God's snare" (the 'compelling, subduing power'), declares a great Sufi teacher. And as this "union in love" is attained, there is an

abundant accession—a surging stream, a tidal flood—of supernal light, charm, sanctity into the normal life of man. Every object reveals an image of God; creation shines forth as “a universal theophany;” and the soul of man is attuned to that “heavenly harmony,” that “song celestial,” which presents the entire cosmic process as a hymn and a rapture. “One gleam,” says Jami, “fell from that transcendent Loveliness on the universe; and from every object its beauty was mirrored forth, and from every quarter its praise was chanted out in fresh harmonies;” and the soul of man was made “all ear as is the shell,” to be entranced with those divine harmonies.

This “union in love” has to be gratefully acknowledged as the Sufis’ (the Mystics’) specific gospel, unto man, of saving faith, uplifting hope, ennobling charity and ecstatic bliss—all attested by intuitive perception, intimate experience, unequivocal certitude.

This saving gospel is profound in its truth as it is exalting in its virtue. Its ultimate object is to earn for the soul of

man a conscious—a felt and enjoyed—touch and contact with the supreme, inexhaustible Fount of light, love, peace, harmony, strength joy, and bliss—in other words, an inflow into the soul of pure life in perennial plenty. And to achieve this noble end, the blessed gospel sets to itself the task of bringing home to “the business and bosom” of man the conviction, the assurance, that God, as He endures from eternity to eternity, inweaves Himself into the texture of the cosmic process which we call creation. In other words, Mysticism declares and insists that it recognises no antithesis, no conflict in conception, as contended by mere thinkers or mere believers, between the Transcendent and the Immanent—the Absolute and the Personal—aspects of the Supreme One. The philosopher (*jnani*) thinks and knows that there is a transcendent Being whose heights cannot be scaled; the believer (*bhakta*) feels the presence of a near God whose praises he sings. Against and above these is the mystic (the *yogi*) in whom the knowledge of the philosopher and the emotion of the believer are transfused and sublimated into the vividness of vision and the glow of

ecstasy. To the mystic, therefore, transcendence and immanence are complements embraced in the synthesis of one comprehensive conception. The God of Transcendence, God in His Essence, is eternal Bliss; the God of Immanence, God in His Expression, is eternal Benevolence; and man, the creature, is the beneficiary of that benevolence; man, the child, is the partner of that bliss. The God of Transcendence is the eternal "I am ;" the God of Immanence is the eternal "I am Thine." The God of Transcendence is self-abiding; the God of Immanence is self-donating. Transcendence emerges into Immanence and becomes Revelation: Immanence resumes into Transcendence and becomes Realisation. I receive God in Immanence; God resumes me in Transcendence. In Sufi phrase, "Thou hast my being taken on and shall not I take on Thine?"

A correct understanding of the "union in love" is essential to our purpose. The basic idea is that, for Love to attain Union, *self* has first to be completely obliterated: it is not disinterestedness, it is not altruism, it is

not benevolence, it is not attachment, it is not devotion ; it is sheer self-elimination, says the *Gulshan-i-Raz*, "When you go out, He will come in." God deigns to dwell in the heart, only when it is thoroughly cleansed of self; rather, would the soul enter the sanctuary, it shall severely leave behind the narrow, insulated self. The Sufis are uncompromising in their attitude and unrelenting in their exactions on this point. They demand a triple *fana* — a threefold extirpation of the self, successively, in the Preceptor the Prophet and the Beloved. It is the complete effacement of self-consciousness, even to the extreme degree of effacement of the self-effacement — utter unawareness of self-dissolution. Two highly instructive stories illustrative of this profound truth may be briefly recalled. A pilgrim, in quest of an asylum, knocks at a door. To the query from indoor, "Who is that?" he makes the answer, "It is I". "In this chamber there can be no room for two," declared the voice from within. The pilgrim resumes his quest, returns wiser after a year and knocks again. To the old query the answer this time is, "I am Thou"; and the divid-

ing door vanishes. Similarly, in that touching story of *Laila-O-Majnun* to which the esteemed lecturer has made a reference, the love-lorn Majnun, exhausted with his bootless search for the beloved, faints on the trunk of a wayside tree and gets as if incorporated into it. Laila, happening to pass by, is struck with the curious spectacle. She has the seeming tree given a blow, when a groan is heard. "Who art thou?" she asks; "I am Laila," is the answer. "That cannot be, for I am Laila," she declares. "If thou art Laila, I am none." And Majnun is immersed in eternal union with the beloved. Hence Rumi's profound declaration—

"The Beloved is all in all, the lover
only veils Him;

The Beloved is all in all, the lover is a
dead thing."

Verily, the lover is a dead thing, dead to self, dead to all of the self, dead save as he lives in the Beloved. "My me is God; I know not my self except in Him," declares St. Catherine of Genoa. This is "Union in Love."

In fine, what is the true . . . the full connotation, of this 'Union'? Union plainly denotes the concurrence of two processes, the confluence of two elements, the coalescence of two agencies; each indispensable, neither eliminable. And *Union* in *Love* can obviously subsist only between one spirit and another spirit--both always essential for the endurance of that relationship. Hence, spiritual union, while it lasts, negates alike separation and absorption. The extinction the *fana* of Sufi theology, necessarily relates to that sense of the isolated self which segregates the narrow egoistic individual from the cosmic order around him—an exile even while in the home. Till that ringfence is destroyed, the soul is not free to evolve and integrate into a definite personality with limitless capacities to enfold and assimilate the environing world and thereby to ascend into a survey of ever-expanding horizons and eventually to outstep the bournes of time and space. It is to ensure the growth of this God-indwelt person that the soul stiffing self has to be sacrificed. This extinction of self-consciousness is, however, totally diffe-

rent from that incident of the human soul losing itself in the Over-soul in which act, according to a widespread idea, man's salvation, his *mukti*, consists. Barring a few casual utterances of extravagant enthusiasm, this notion of the soul's dissolution as an entity finds no place in Sufi thought. The soul, the essential spirit of man, is indestructible, even as its Author is immortal. The soul is that imperishable essence which, as Dr. Martineau observes, is too adamant for the weight even of infinity to crush out. Indeed it is the human soul that is the sole *creation* of God; the rest that goes by that name is only His handiwork. The human soul is the essential; all else is incidental. The soul is the offspring of Divine love; God has created man to exemplify and satisfy His own love; and 'where God once loves, He loves for ever.' Hence, this "Union in Love" is, not annihilation or absorption or assimilation, but complete self-realisation of the soul in enraptured enjoyment of God as Supreme Beauty—the Eternal Beloved. "The flame of eternal love burns in the soul"—not to consume but to illumine, not to quench but to

sublimate, not to extinguish but to transfigure, the soul. Or, as Wordsworth has it, "rapt in still communion," the soul suspends the processes of thought, as it is completely caught up in ecstatic enjoyment of God. In the impressive language of a very high authority on the subject of Mysticism (Miss Underhill), "intent on the Eternal, the soul is not alive to its own perception of the Eternal"; "this vivid act of impassioned perception leaves no room for self-observation"; "the mystic in his ecstasy *knows* all but *thinks* naught, he *perceives* all but *conceives* naught." Thus, this union is, not a lapse into non-being, but a rebirth into pure being. As the revolving top at its swiftest "sleeps" (but not drops); as the unchecked stream at its fastest flows still (but is not stagnant); as the vivid light at its brightest turns invisible (but is not quenched); so, the soul at its holiest puts on the immortal—it does not cease to be; it stands above the flux and reflux of life and death: it is immortal. In ecstatic union, the soul is as the clean-burnished mirror to reflect the Divine and is perceptible only as it bears that reflection.

It is a life of absolute identification with God: a life, not only under God's eye, not alone in Divine companionship, not merely in unswerving devotion and unreserved dedication to God; but it is life in God—indwelt and encompassed by God: shall we say, 'in the bosom of God'? As the Sufis try to depict it, "We are pearls *in* that Sea of the soul, that Ocean of pure being." "I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I. We are as two souls in one body. When you see me, you see Him; and when you see Him, you see us both." In spiritual union, the soul surmounts the limitations and transcends the bounds imposed by the sense-circumscribed self and reaches the fullest measure, the amplest magnitude, possible for a God-vivified and God-captivated being endowed with powers for interminable growth in wisdom, goodness and grace, even unto the perfection of our Father in Heaven.

Again, this "Union in Love" is not mere state, it is a prolonged process, a perpetual progress; a "becoming" to which no limit can be set. "The House of Love has no bound or

end," declares the Sufi. The office of Mysticism, to adopt the language of a noteworthy exponent thereof, is to define, to evidence, to man the Infinite and the Eternal by infinitising and eternalising the human soul. This 'saint's progress' ranges over Infinity and endures through Eternity. In the language of Western Mysticism, the "Eternal Circle" is *from Goodness, through Goodness, to Goodness*; to which Sufism adds a fourth curve, "*in Goodness.*" *Baqa bad ul fana*—life in the Truth after annihilation of the self. This is Sufi Theism; and in this doctrine of the highest spiritual value, our Brahmo Theism is in perfect agreement with Sufi Theism. From the illustrious Founder of the Samaj downwards, our great masters have uniformly taught us that after *mukti* through *advaitam*, our immortality consists in *sasvatam* in Brahma, eternality in God (*Namo Brahamane vyapini sasvataya*).

Having thus far attempted a brief, indeed, a very sketchy, Study of the Sufi doctrine of "Union in Love," we may next sit at the feet of certain of the great masters and receive, direct from them, a few of the golden words

in which are disclosed, to our incalculable benefit, some of the mysteries, the profound verities, relating to the Supreme Reality, the Supernal Beauty, that they visioned and adored in their lives.

Sufis are they, we learn, who prefer God to everything else and whom God prefers to everything else. Among these whom the Divine Spirit has thus chosen to be the media for conveying the Light of heavenly guidance to seekers of truth, we instinctively bow in profound obeisance first to her whose soul carried in itself the very quintessences of Divine Love—so little of the mortal, so close of kin to the immortal. *Ra'bia*. "Consume, O Lord," she prays, "with Thy fire this heart that loveth Thee." "If I seek Thee for fear of hell, cast me into that hell; if I seek Thee for joys of heaven, keep me out of that heaven; but if I seek Thee for Thyself, hide not Thy face from me." "The sincere servant" (the true devotee) is not he who receives the blows (misfortunes) of life in mere resignation to the will of the Lord, or as wise chastisement ordained for

his well-being, or as disguised grace for which he shall render thanks; it is he in whom the joy of beholding the love-illuminising face of the Lord "physics" all pain. Ra'bia prizes not the *Ka'ba* to which all Muslims devoutly turn: 'it is Thou that I want.' "My sole concern, my supreme desire is—in this world to remember Thee alone, and in the next world to meet with Thee alone." To Hasan's question, how she knows God, the answer is, "Thou knowest Him as such and such; I, as *Non-such*" (the *neti*, the incomparable, the ineffable).—*Bayazid* declares "To those who obey Him God gives a robe of honour. Others earnestly strive for that robe; I desire of Him naught but Himself. Others may rely on their own righteousness; but I rely on His free bounty." "Of a surety, he who is merged in the Truth (*Al Haq*) attains to the very reality of all that exists."—The question, "when is a servant *true* in his devotion?" *Junaid* answers with, when he sees all things in the absolute sway of God, Most High; for we come from Him, we subsist in Him, we return to Him". — According to *Mansur Al-Hallaj* "the way to God is two

steps: with the first you go out of this world; with the second out of the next world; and lo! you are there with the Lord!" "When man knows the One Person, and the One Person knows man that is *ecstasy*."—*All Ghazzali* exhorts us to be detached from all that is not God and to make the contemplation of the Divine Being the sole occupation of the heart; for that is the way to *Union*—. Farid-ud-din Attar describes the Supreme Reality in words that stir the soul to its very bottom: "The Highest is a sun-mirror; he who comes to Him sees himself therein." At the end of their flight, the birds "saw themselves all as the Seemuagh, saw themselves in the Eternal Seemurgh, and indeed saw the Seemuagh in one and all of them."—By Sa'di, master-moralist as he is, we are taught truths of the highest spiritual value: it is not the nightingale, it is the moth, that reveals *true love*: the former merely sings and sighs; the latter fulfils itself by death in the *flame*; you are aware of the rose-garden, (ecstatic bliss) only when outside the rose-garden, within the garden you forget yourself; the Supreme Lord grieves at

the sight of the sinner, whom, when in true penitence, He readily forgives and welcomes into heaven with a smile of grace; the sons of Adam are limbs of one another, for in their origin they are of one essence.—Hafiz, upon whom Emerson pronounces very high eulogium compares himself to a parrot to which the trainer holds a mirror from behind which he trains the bird; and he declares, ‘What the Eternal says, I stammering say again’; “the Haji (pilgrim to Mecca) sees the Temple (the *Ka’ba*) but I see the Lord of the Temple”; “the understanding’s copper coin counts not with the gold of Love”; “we would do nothing but good, and should we on that account be denied Paradise, the *howris* themselves will come out of it”—Lastly, though far from the lowest in spiritual height, Jami: “Speculators devoid of insight find this world a mere idea of the mind; it is an idea, but they fail to see the great Idealist who looms behind.” “This ‘all’ begets distraction of the heart; give up thy heart to *One* and break with all.” “Every beauty manifested in the world of being is a ray of his perfect Beauty reflected therein.” “I would be Thy lover and Thine

only, my eyes being closed in the light of Thee to all but Thee. Look whence I will, still I discern Thee alone in all the Universe."

"Make, my heart pure, my soul from
error free,
Make tears and sighs my daily lot to be,
And lead me on Thy road away from self,
That, lost to self, I may attain to Thee."

Now, we may close our contemplation of this exalting theme with the heart's deep homage of gratitude and reverence to the royal soul whose sovereign gift to humanity is that almost inexhaustible treasure-house of divine wisdom, the *Masnavi-i-Ma'navi*. It is indubitably one of the greatest of the great 'world books'— a message emanating from the very heart of Nature to cheer and guide mankind through all the secular-to-be. Its deliverer must, of a surety, have caught into his soul a ray of the transcendent glory amidst which He, the Eternal Solitary, dwells, as our Potanamatyia informs us, beyond the "Divine Dark" that surmounts the countless worlds with their numberless denizens. He speaks as

a voice out of "the Empyrean" of the All-Holy. No wonder, then, that he and his immortal work should be reverently pronounced by those that know, *nabi neist vale kitab daradi* perchance not a prophet; but he possesses (and presents to the race) a 'book,' a gospel; in which he "makes plain the secrets of the Way of Unity, and unveils the mysteries of the Path of Eternal Truth." Comprising six books (to which some would add a seventh), each book divided into several sections, the work is said to go beyond twenty five thousand verses, mostly dictated to a trusty scribe; while the physical frame of him who recited the heavenly truths revolved fast around a pillar. Such inspired bards are the very oracles of God; and without the least compromise of the heaven-chartered freedom of the soul, they need to be studied and pondered with hope and reverence. Through successive generations, they shed light in increasing clearness; and each interpreter finds his best thought anticipated. "The ways of God," observes Rumi, "are as the number of the souls of men." Here, an adequate selection, still less a compre-

hensive epitome, is not to be thought of. Only a handful of jewels and pearls out of the vast main is possible. To begin with, the Maulana's own estimate of the scope of the *masnavi*: it contains the roots of the roots of the roots of the 'Faith' and treats of the mysteries of 'Union' and 'Certitude'; it is 'a path for the devout and a garden for the pious'. Its chief theme is Divine Love—the irrepressible longing of the soul for union with God and the eon-long pilgrimage towards that devout consummation. This is announced in the opening prologue of the work, called the song of the reed-flute; which constitutes the key-note of the entire poem. The reed, severed from the parent stalk in the osier-bed, makes moan to all men and women of feeling, stating how its heart is burst with pangs of yearning for its lost home. Its wailings are heard in every group of men, and each group interprets the plaintive notes after its own mood. In itself, the cry is inspired by the fire of love; and the fire can be quenched only by union with the Beloved. This love is "sweet madness"; it exalts the earthly

body to heaven; it makes the very hills dance with joy; its rays mount up to the firmament; its purifying virtues render the soul a burnished mirror that reflects the Sun.—In his praises of this Love, Rumi breaks into raptures. Love, he defines as the “astrolabe of God’s mysteries.” In a passage of unmatched brilliance, he enumerates the miracles of love: *Through love*, bitter things taste sweet, pains prove healing balms, thorns become roses, prisons seem bowers, sickness is health, grief is joy, wrath is mercy, reverses are good fortune, the dead rise to life.—The Maulana dwells incessantly on the compassion and mercy attributes of the Deity — *Raheem-o-Kareem*. In God are forever blended *jalal*, the glory of awe-inspiring holiness, and *jamal*, the grace of all-enrancing beatitude—the *Jalal* of the Adorable One and the *jamal* of the Embracing One. Who, Rumi asks, is ‘liberal like God?’ He buys the worthless rubbish which is your wealth of sense-exhilaration by paying the light that illumines the heart; He takes a few drops of your tears and gives you the divine fount of bliss.—God has set His

image on every object in the universe; the world is God's pure mirror clear, when seen with Love's pure eyes.—God is the Spirit in the spirit; His light illumines the senses' light, Light upon light.—God makes the human heart His true sanctuary. The Holy One for ever declares: "I am contained in the believers' hearts; would you seek Me, search for Me in such hearts." The only mosque is in the hearts of the saints; it is the place of worship for all, for God dwells there. "I surveyed", says Rumi, in his other great work, *Div'an-i-Shams Ta'briz*, "Cross and Christians from end to end; I went to numerous temples and pagodas. I climbed the mountains of Herat and Kandahar. But no trace of Him in hill and dale! I gazed into my own heart; there I saw Him." God is the supreme, all-sufficing delight of the human heart. "With Thee a prison would be a rose-garden and hell itself would be heaven; without Thee roses and lilies would be flames of fire." "Nothing so bitter as severance from Thee." Hence, in the economy of human life, *pain* has a very useful purpose. "Pain is," Rumi

declares, "a treasure; it has great mercies."
 "His bitters are very sweets to my soul."
 "Pain, cares, sorrows are the lot of God's friends in this world"; and the life of Pharoah is cited as a vivid example of the man of no pain. "He never felt a head-ache; he never cried to God; he boasted he was the Supreme; and he fell utterly out of Divine grace; his soul lost salvation."—Again, judge a man's lot in life by the state of his heart; see if the heart be humble; the heart is the substance, all the rest are accidents: kindle in the heart the flame of love; and you are blessed.—Prophets are as mirrors set by the trainer before parrots; God speaks from behind them. They are agents, not intermediaries. Prophets relate themselves to all righteous men: in the adorations and benedictions of God-fearing souls, the praises of all the prophets are kneaded together. He that is praised in the praises of them all is, in fact, the Only One.—Love and Service, Devotion and Duty, Worship and Work go together in the true Sufi, the genuine lover. "While the thought of the Beloved fills the heart, all our work is to do Him service and spend life with

Him". "The worker is the friend of God ; the true lover of God practises trust with self-exertion: "through trust in Providence, neglect not to use means," "trust in God and tie the camel's legs," as the Koran teaches us.—Our heart shall ever be set on God and God alone. Whatever withdraws Thy gaze from God is an idol.—And here is a truly blessed definition of woman : "Woman is a ray of God, not a mere mistress."

We may, for a moment, dwell on the ever-abundant fertility of Rumi's mind in exemplifying profound religious truths and high moral principles by homely illustrations and attractive tales. This faculty testifies to two great powers in Rumi—one, the clearness of thought and the lucidity of expression that can bring home even to the average mind the ground principles of human faith and human conduct, exalted truth entering humble hearts through "lowly doors" ; and the other, that penetration, that insight, to which the whole universe stands revealed as the academy of wisdom set up for the soul's direct instruction by the Divine Teacher. Before

Jesus of our times; we are his disciples." Here is a **most** valuable suggestion for international peace, universal harmony. As we dive deep into the faith that dwells in the devout ones of all denominations, we discover the same, all-embracing Love which urges us to gather into one confraternity—one communion of the spirit—the good, the pure, the lovely souls of all ages and all climes, to chant hosannas of praise to the one, all-cherishing God in whom we live and move and have our being, and to establish peace and harmony among all the races that people the face of the earth.

Let us, as we bow before the spirit of Rumi in profound reverence, receive into our hearts his farewell benediction, his testament unto posterity: "My testament is this that ye be pious towards God, in private and in public; that ye depart from wickedness and sin; that ye flee from carnal lusts with all your might; that ye endure patiently the contumely of the world; that ye consort with the noble-hearted and the pious. Verily the best man is he who doeth good to men, and the best speech is that which guideth men aright. Praise be to God who is the only God!"

OPINIONS

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"The Brahma Samaj should win numbers to spiritual religion when it can utter its great truths by such a voice."

J. Estlin Carpenter.

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"A teacher of many in his great land, he would be a teacher of respect for it and its children in this country."

"The Inquirer."—London.

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"If any were to read this book with no other object than that of learning English, he would find in it a most valuable help."

Pandit Sitanath Tattwabhushan,
in "The Indian Messenger."

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"The style, without disdaining figure and ornament, becomes more restrained in order to be the fit vehicle of solid thought and effective argument."—

The Rev. A. G. Hogg,
in "The Madras X'ian College Magazine."

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“Treasury of pious sentiments and devotional thoughts.”— “The Modern Review”

Calcutta.

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“Your messages and discourses ought to open the eyes of the youths of the country to the realities of our religion and to the noxious character of many of the observances which hide the precious truth within.”

Sir T. V. Seshagiri Aiyar.

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“The addresses are so human and so living that they cannot but be based on the only solid rock of eternal truth; and the religion in them is identical with ours.”

Dr. Rosslyn Bruce of Sussex

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“He must have been a very wonderful man, and gifted with a great insight into the inner workings of a boy’s mind’.

The Rev. A. J. Skinner.

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"I read through them with the greatest interest and realised what a very noble person Sir R. Venkata Ratnam was.....He is one whom I have always wished and longed to know for his goodness, about which I have so often heard." The Rev. C. F. Andrews.

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His writings are a rich ore of gems of spiritual life of purest ray serene. They easily lend themselves to tunes and, if translated into hymns, will enrich the hymnology of the Brahma Samaj... The New Dispensation of the Age has marked him out as an organ of its self-expression.—

Beni Madhav Das, M.A., in "The World and the New Dispensation."

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"Sir Venkata Ratnam is, in all senses of the term, a modern man; but in him is found the best type of piety for which we wistfully look to the past but in vain."

Prof. Dhirendranath Vedantavagish, M.A., in the "Modern Review".

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“An elegant classic style, marked by a striking choice of diction and balance and perspicuity of expression, a remarkable command and masterly manipulation of language, an intuitive insight and a scholarly treatment of subjects, are features that can hardly escape the notice of even a superficial reader”:-Pandit Srish Chandra Vedantabhushan (Bhagavataratna), B. A., in “The Indian Messenger” of Calcutta.



